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THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

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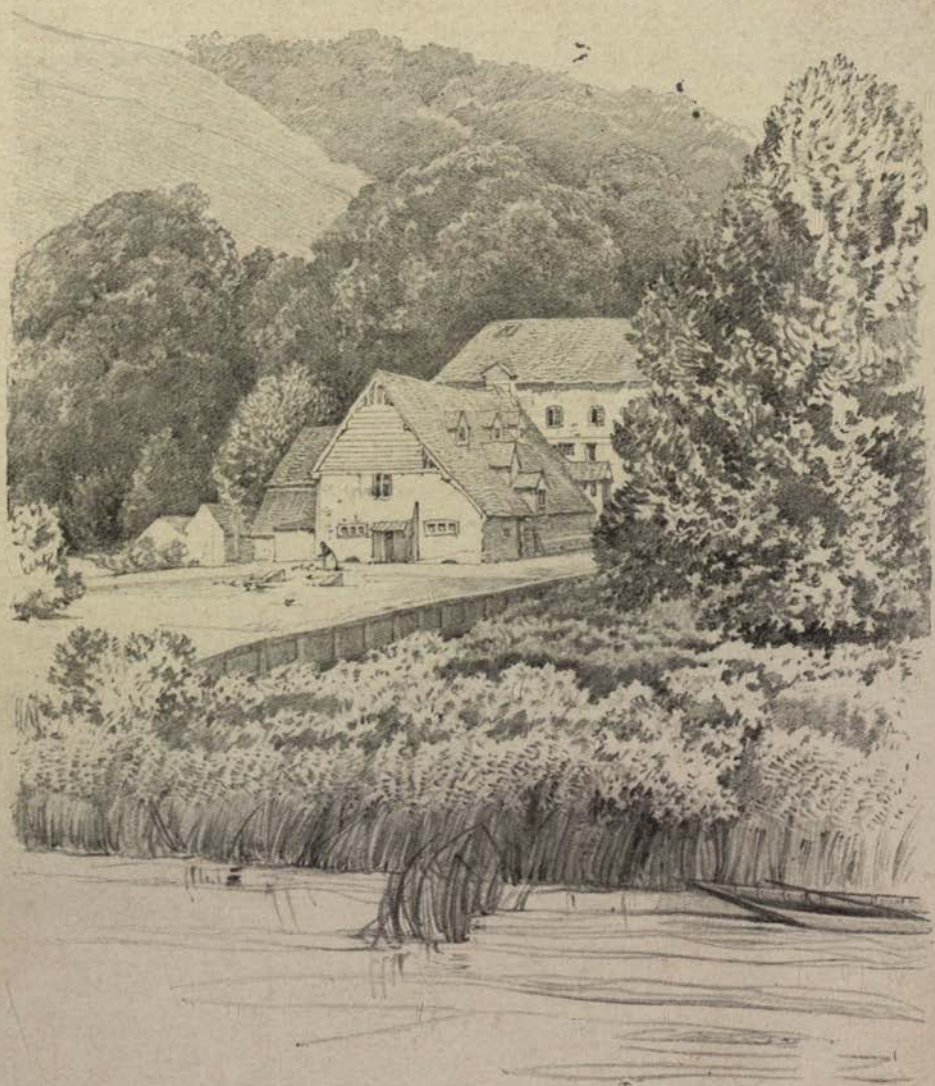
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WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018



I. STREATLEY MILL, BERKSHIRE.

Drawn by A. E. Newcombe.

83

THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

By
ERNEST C. PULBROOK

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S.C-115

LONDON

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*Our little land of shine and rain,
Our land of grey and green,
The stubble-field, the shady lane,
Each old familiar scene;
The bare-backed cliffs, the rippled sand,
The closely girding waves.
And, in hushed nooks of hallowed land,
Those dear sequestered graves.*

JESSIE POPE.



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PREFACE

WE live in times when change is so rapid that customs and institutions of even a decade ago are no longer familiar. Everywhere the old is giving place to the new, and the methods of our forefathers are too leisurely for this hurrying age. The whole face of England is being rapidly altered, and this is perhaps more noticeable in the country, even in the most remote districts, than in the towns, where we look for change and improvements. So many old landmarks are being swept away that it seems time to call a halt and at least to take a survey before the old is banished by the new. In the towns it is perhaps almost too late to begin to preserve the buildings of the past, but in the country it is different. During most of the nineteenth century the country stagnated while the towns grew and prospered, but now ease of communication and the desire to see the country has brought about a change ; the city is being regarded only as a workshop and the country as the place in which to live. People, too, are beginning to understand that rural England is, and has always been, as important as the towns, and that scattered up and down the land are places not only beautiful in themselves, but full of the associations of the past. Each has played its part in the making of England as we know it to-day, and each has some story to tell, if we can only learn to read. An old rubbish heap may contain a wealth of romance, and a commonplace custom may have had its origin in the days when the inhabitants of these islands were little better than barbarians.

Although there is now so much change—perhaps because of it—we all are beginning to understand the romance of old things, and as rural England is gradually becoming one vast holiday resort, we are

learning to take an interest in our priceless heritage. It is not an uncommon occurrence to be asked what that old building is, or the origin of that bridge, or how it comes about that this little village has such a large church. Of course, the answer will be found in many a weighty tome or archæological magazine, but the everyday man has little leisure to enter into close study of such matters, even if he have the inclination. But put the main outlines before him simply and brightly, attract his attention even slightly, and he will begin to discover an interest in the common things to be found all over the country, and to understand something about the wonderful past of England. In these hard-working days the doctors tell us that we want more exercise and more fresh air, but the man born and bred in the town often finds the countryside dull and uninteresting unless he is shown that it is perhaps more attractive than the city, although its delights are more natural and less manufactured. An English landscape is always beautiful, and when we understand something about the cause of its fashioning, interest is added to beauty, so that we find new attractions and new hobbies where we had not expected.

This must be the excuse and the apology for the following pages. They do not contain deep archæological facts or pretend to set forth new historical research, but merely make an attempt to show the ordinary man something of the wonders revealed by a day's walk in any part of England, just the commonplace things that anyone may find for himself without haunting museums or poring over musty documents. They do not claim originality or learning, but are the bold attempt of one who knows and loves the English countryside to awake the same interest in those who may be inclined, perhaps unconsciously, to consider that the towns and cities alone are England. Stern critics may say the picture is over-bright, and that the sombre side of country life is left untouched, but, when all is said and done, there is more cause for gratitude than regret. In these days the tendency is to look on the worst side of things, and the disadvantages of rural England have been painted so frequently of late that a little optimism can do no harm. In a critical study of

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the countryside misery would have its place as well as happiness, but in a book which attempts only to set forth its attractions in order to arouse interest, harping on tragedy would do little good and would repel rather than charm. To stimulate knowledge is to awaken sympathy, and one cannot learn to know rural England without wanting to reduce its hardships and relieve its monotony. This cannot be done without knowledge, and you cannot expect to understand the countryman without knowing something of the past and the events that have made his life what it is. And there is true joyousness in the country—the joy of harvest, the joy of a fine evening or the coming of spring, the joy of rain after drought. The country teaches patience and hope ; it soothes the nerves ; and its wide spaces bring content and teach the immensity of things as life in the fretting city can never hope to do. If this book helps some to understand the wonderful interest of any corner of our countryside, and how much of its past is worth preserving, it will not have been written in vain.

E. C. P.

56 CHAPTER ROAD,
WILLESDEN GREEN,
February 1915.

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NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is difficult to know exactly where to begin and where to end in acknowledging those to whom I am indebted. I might begin with those who first awakened my interest in the countryside and all it has to show, and end with the unknown wayside friends who have told a local legend or pointed out an old building off the road. I owe much to many writers old and new, topographers and local journalists, antiquarians and architects, artists and photographers, who first aroused my interest and led me to see and learn for myself. A few of the chapters appeared in *The Country Home* magazine with some of their illustrations, but the majority of these have been more or less altered, rewritten, and reillustrated. I am also indebted to various issues of *Notes and Queries* for much of the information on the subject of field names.

I must express my sincere thanks to all those photographers who kindly placed their collections at my disposal in order to supplement my own, and in some cases took the photographs required. The difficulty has been not to obtain photographs, but to select a representative series illustrating places mentioned and points raised. Messrs. F. Frith & Co., of Reigate, whose collection of photographs of the English countryside must be unrivalled, afforded such a wide range that the task of selection was no light one. The following illustrations have been reproduced from their series: Figures 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 27, 29, 36, 39, 40, 51, 56, 63, 68, 73, 75, 76, 87, 89, 98, and 107. To the Photochrom Company I am indebted for 16, 64, 69, 70, 72, 83, and 85; and to my Publishers for a good many helpful examples supplied from their collections.

I have to thank Mr. A. E. Newcombe for the charming frontis-

piece, and Mr. H. J. Smith for a number of photographs, from which 3, 7, 35, 43, 88, 91, 120, and 126 were chosen. Nos. 65, 115, 116, 124, and 125 are from photographs by Mr. Benjamin Hanley, and Nos. 8, 19, 32, and 121 by Mr. Lloyd Elias. Mrs. Erskine has contributed 47 and 53; Mr. F. H. Crossley, 51 and 80; Mr. G. Granville Buckley, 90 and 96; Mr. H. Nelson King, 86 and 106; and the following have each supplied one photograph: Messrs. Atherton Fleming (9); W. Pouncy, Dorchester, Dorset (20); P. Nichols (34); Herbert Longbottom (44); Arthur Brook (62); G. A. M. Baker (101); F. Mason Good (117); and Mrs. Lyne (119). Subjects not specified in the above list are contributions from my own camera.

Lastly my thanks are due to Mr. Harry Batsford, whose valuable assistance and kindness in making suggestions, finding photographs, and helping me in every way I can only inadequately acknowledge. Thanks to his generous co-operation many improvements have been effected.

E. C. P.

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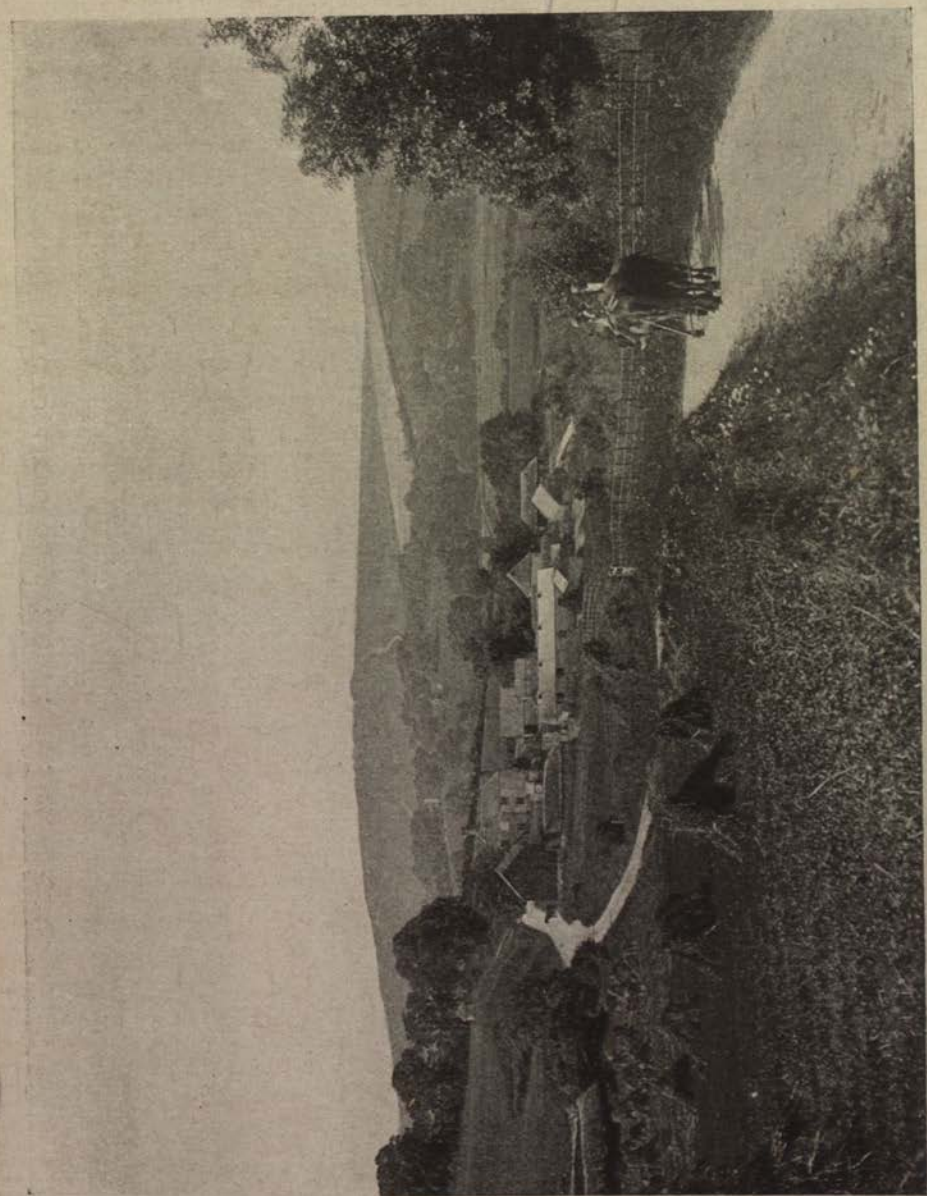
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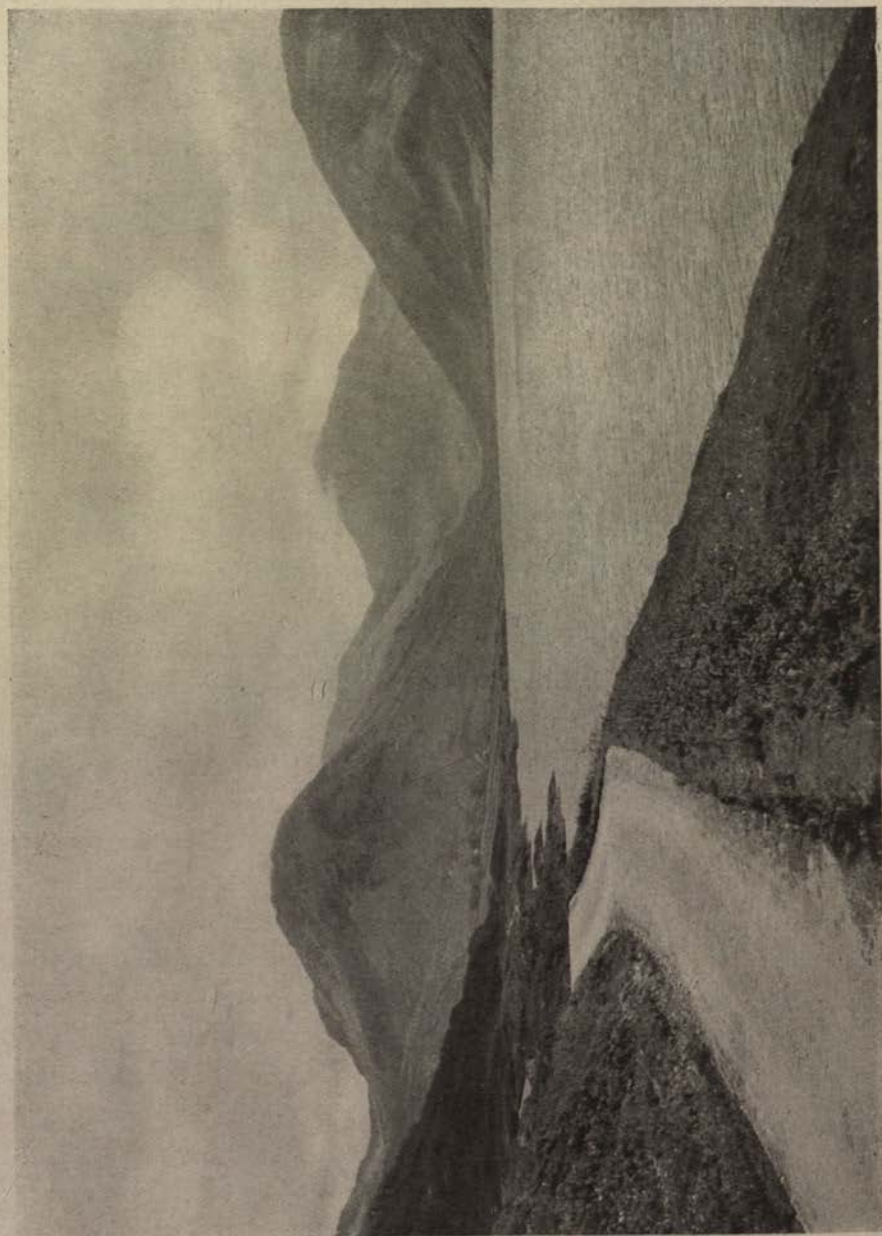
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2. LULLINGTON HILL, SEAFORD.



3. WASTWATER, LOOKING TO GREAT GABLE.

THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

I

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND ITS STORY

Hear hills do lift their heads | aloft from whence sweet | springes doe flow :
Whose moistvr good doth | firtil make the valleis | covchte belowe.
Hear goodly orchards | planted are in frvite | which doo abovnde
Thine ey wolde make their | hart rejoyce to see | so pleasant grovnde !

On a Sixteenth Century tapestry map in the Bodleian Library.

It is not for nothing that England is known far and wide as the Homeland, the land of peaceful prospects and little homes. Through all the ages England has been the inspiration of her children, the shrine before which they have never ceased to offer up the incense of love and devotion and praise. Not boastfully, not vaingloriously, but fervently, with deep contentment that such a home is theirs. As Prince so fittingly words it : "I would not be thought to speak so bold a truth of my country out of vanity or ostentation ; but let it be to the glory and praise of the great God, who has signally blessed us and laid so much the greater obligation on us to gratitude and obedience."

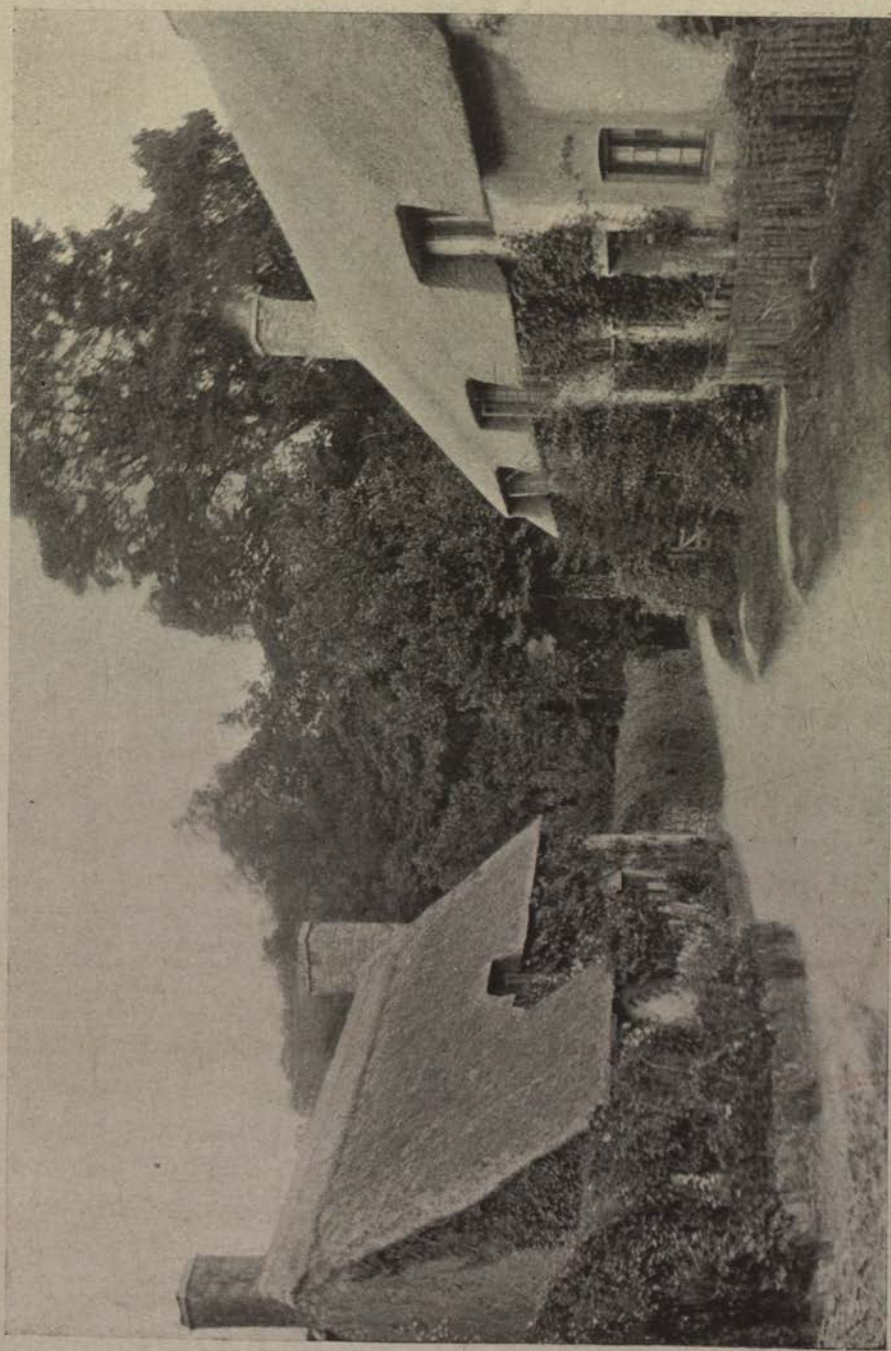
What is the magic that holds the hearts of her countrymen so fast that her plainest and most unprepossessing corner is of more worth to him who was born there than the fairest and most fertile spot in all the world? Perhaps William Morris found the best answer when he wrote :—

"The land is a little land, sirs, too much shut up within the narrow seas, as it seems, to have much space for swelling into

hugeness ; there are no great wastes overwhelming in their dreariness, no great solitudes of forests, no terrible untrodden mountain walls ; all is measured, mingled, varied, gliding easily one thing into another ; little rivers, little plains, swelling speedily-changing uplands, all beset with handsome orderly trees ; little hills, little mountains, netted over with the walls of sheep-walks ; all of it little, yet not foolish or blank, but serious rather, and abundant of meaning for such as choose to seek it ; it is neither prison nor palace, but a decent home.

“All which I neither praise nor blame, but say that so it is. Some people praise this homeliness overmuch, as if the land were the very axle-tree of the world ; so do not I, nor any unblinded by pride in themselves and all that belongs to them. Others there are who scorn it, and the tameness of it ; not I any the more ; though it would indeed be hard if there were nothing else in the world, no wonders, no terrors, no unspeakable beauties. Yet when we think what a small part of the world’s history, past, present and to come, is this land we live in, and how much smaller still in the history of the arts, and yet how our forefathers clung to it, and with what care and pains they adorned it, this unromantic, uneventful-looking land of England, surely by this too, our hearts may be touched and our hope quickened.”

Ask the exile working in some far corner of the world what it is that makes him labour so hard that he may return to end his days amidst the scenes of his youth, and though the answer may be halting and involved its meaning is plain, because there is a homeliness and peace about the English countryside that is not to be found elsewhere. It is not of the great city that he speaks or for the excitements of the town that he longs, but for the peace and freshness of the country. The soul of England must not be sought in the city but in the countryside ; the city is the working-place, the prison in which we must toil to earn our freedom ; it is only the beloved abiding-place of the few, the many yearn for a cottage and a plot of ground where the wind blows pure and the heavens are not masked by a pall of gloom.



4. A CORNER IN A WEST COUNTRY VILLAGE : DUNSTER.



5. MARLEY COMMON, HASLEMERE.



6 CAVEDALE, CASTLETON, DERBYSHIRE.

It is the country that has made England and all that of which her name is a symbol. From her manor houses and little cottages came forth the men who made her great, the men who gave their lives to an ideal and fought to free her from oppression. The marks of her native genius are in the country rather than in the towns, for to the towns came the foreigner, bringing influences which affected habits and customs and methods, but made little or no impression on the humble people who stamped their individuality upon the countryside for all to see. It was the toil of countless countrymen through the ages that laid the foundation of our towns, and it is the country that teaches us that England was built up by generations of unknown workers. Of no land can it be said with greater truth that the humble people made her great, and the countryside as we know it to-day is the outcome of their activities and their lives. It is to them that we owe the ordered homeliness and air of peaceful settlement that is perhaps its greatest charm.

This impression of settlement through the centuries is ever present; the arts of long ago flourish side by side with those of to-day. The gables of the cottages remind us of the rude dwellings that took the place of the beehive hut; on their hearths are the simple yet artistic implements which have hardly differed through many generations; the latches of their doors and the fastenings on the gates bear witness to the unchanging usages of the country. There is a homely beauty and a simple fitness about the common articles of use that are wanting in those made to-day, and it is in the country that they are still common. "For as was the land, such was the art of it, while folk yet troubled themselves about such things; it strove little to impress people either by pomp or ingenuity; not unseldom it fell into commonplace, rarely it rose into majesty. Yet was it never oppressive, never a slave's nightmare nor an insolent boast; and at its best it had an inventiveness, an individuality that grander styles have never overpassed. Its best, too, and that was in its very heart, was given as freely to the yeoman's house and the humble village church, as to the lord's palace or the mighty cathedral; never coarse, though often rude

enough, sweet, natural, and unaffected, an art of peasants rather than of merchant-princes or courtiers, it must be a hard heart I think that does not love it, whether a man has been born among it like ourselves, or has come wonderingly on its simplicity from all the grandeur over seas.”¹

This individuality and fitness for use of most things in the country make rural England greatly attractive, especially to those who return to it after long absence. Everything fits in its setting so naturally and so quietly that its very harmony calls attention to the concord that exists between the arrangements of Nature and the work of men's hands. The little gardens before the cottage doors seem as natural and as much in place as the riot of wild blossom at the hedge-foot. The old cottages and small farms, mellowed by age and weather, are in such perfect keeping with their environment that they might be a growth of Nature rather than the handiwork of man. The reason is not far to seek. In the day they were built every district was self-supporting; except in rare instances the material that lay ready to hand was used and the style was dictated by tradition and experience. In stone countries the builders went out and quarried their own stone; where stone is rare but wood abounding the cottages are of timber framing filled with wattle-and-daub or brick; and elsewhere we find thick walls of puddled mud called “cob”, or wood and plaster. Thus it is that the dwellings of the country are actually part of the soil on which they stand, and there are no harsh contrasts, no staring dissimilarities, but each melts imperceptibly into the other with the lapse of time.

So as we wander through England the individual characteristics of different localities are impressed upon us in a hundred ways, the buildings reflecting the broad distinctions much as the shimmering surface of a pool mirrors the cottage by its side, detail-less and somewhat distorted perhaps, but unmistakable; and as the ruffled water gives no hard edges, no clear-cut divisions, so do the characteristics of each district merge into one another by degrees.

¹ William Morris.



7. A LAKELAND FARMSTEAD.



8. CASTLE COMBE, NORTH WILTSHIRE.



9. THE FLATS OF THE OUSE VALLEY IN MARCH.



10. SOUTHPOL CREEK, DEVON, AT LOW TIDE.

Each of us has his own heart's favourite to which he hies in his moments of leisure and to which he directs his thoughts when he would dwell in some paradise of his own imaginings. "Some shires", says Fuller, "Joseph-like, have a better coloured coat than others, and some, with Benjamin, have a more bountiful mess of meat belonging to them. Yet every county hath a child's portion, as if God in some sort observed gavelkind in the distribution of His favours." Let us remember this when arguing the unusual beauty of our own best beloved county, for as all have their specially lovely corners and particular attractions it is impossible to make comparisons in so much diversity.

How can the rolling windswept downs of Sussex be compared with the chalk hills of the Chilterns, with their slopes and summits clothed in the glory of the beechwoods? The flat expanses of the Fens, broken by the spires of churches and trees that bow before the wind, have nothing in common with the furzy heaths of Dorset or the commons of Surrey. The grandeur of a Lakeland mountain rising high above the still waters at its foot is quite unlike the misty eerieness of a Dartmoor tor, and the smiling combes of Devon and the placid Broad of Norfolk have no counterparts elsewhere. Like cannot even be compared with like, for the marshes of the Essex coast bear no resemblance to the flatlands of Somerset, where from the levels start up so abruptly the hills of Mendip and Polden.

Thus, as we travel through this land of ours, we learn to understand that it has as many facets as a well-cut diamond; hold the gem in a ray of sunlight, and as it is turned about each catches the rays in turn, flashing all the colours of the rainbow in many ways and at many angles, so that it is impossible to say which effect is most beautiful. So it is with England; it is the innumerable small points that build up the attractiveness of the whole. To generalise is to lose sight of its many-sidedness: a lifetime would not exhaust its possibilities, and all the lover of the countryside can do is to touch on a few of the aspects brought to his notice as they glint in the sunlight.

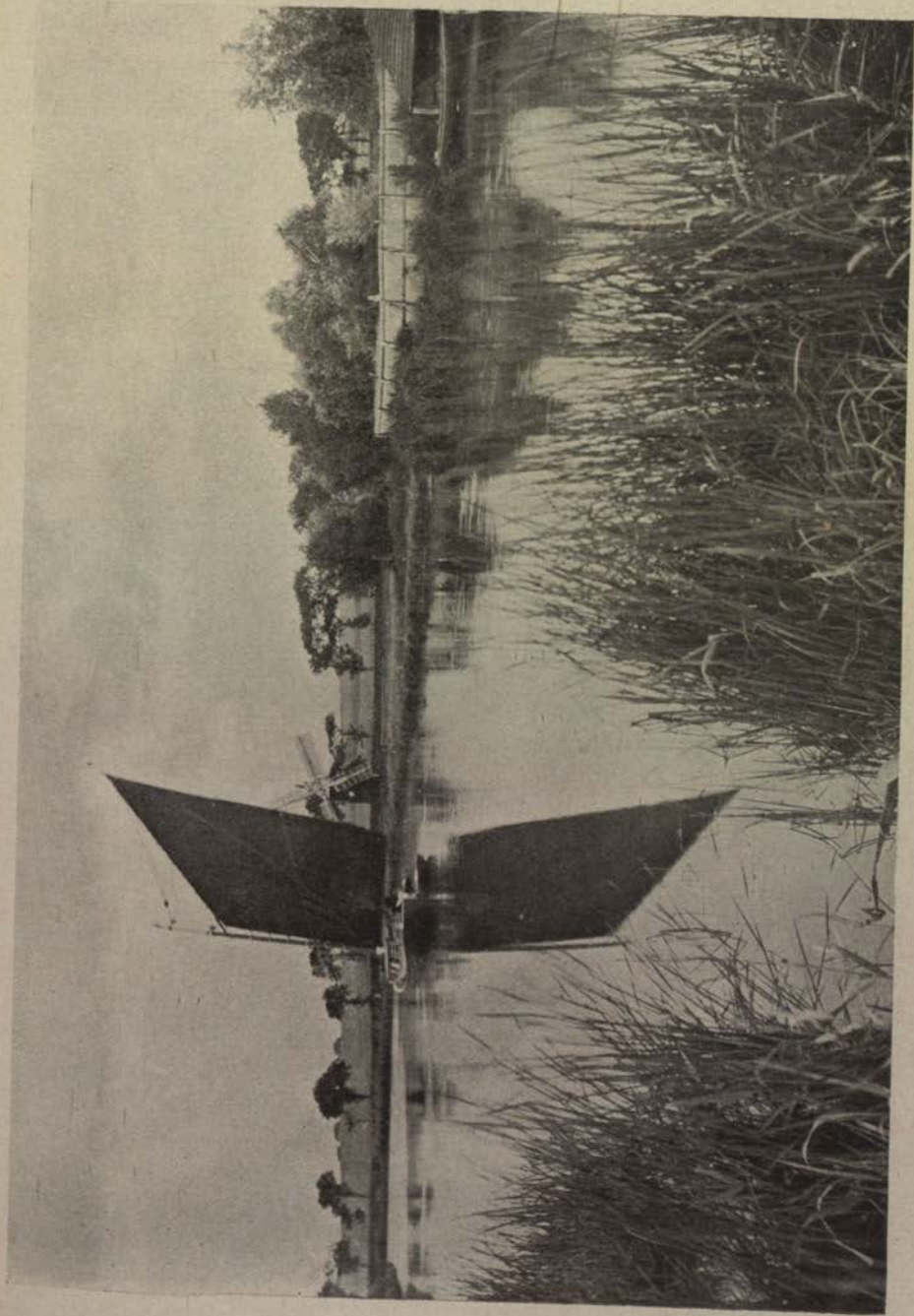
Start where we will some feature calls attention to the beauty of

the land, some link with the past recalls the story of its making, some fleeting impression tells of the passing of the seasons, or some commonplace object brings to mind the crafts of the country. And as we go we "drift into the past as in a dream", always with a "sense of mystery, of broad immensity in ages far behind and yet to come". "A flint, a pebble, or a bit of bronze kicked up by accident, comes like the word or sound but partly understood when half asleep, that shapes our visions into pictures clear and bold."¹

If we stand upon the bulwarks of our cliffs we gaze on the barrows that hide the bones of a chieftain ages dead, or look out over the battlefield where the lordship of the country has been won. We descend to smiling creeks, by whose mouths are sleepy ports, that, famous in their day, built up the commerce that brought us wealth, or to mouldering shipyards, the cradles of our early might. Broad estuaries narrow to placid rivers, and rivers to tumbling becks, their springs beside the ruined dwellings of long passed people whose home was on the open moor. On their way from hill to sea the streams bubble between the stones of crossing-places, pass shallow ford and ancient bridge which have heard the clash of arms or the more peaceful music of the pack-train leader's bells.

Or there lies before us the network of old road, ancient track, and footpath way. Climbing and falling, twisting and turning, they begin and end according to our pleasure. Onward they go, past farms that once were manor houses, over commons fringed with the cottage dwellings of the poor, through woods, and over hills. Here is a ruined chapel, now a shed, all that remains of a once rich monastery; there a tall gateway, graven with the arms of an extinct family, the only remnant of the mediæval house that stood where the modern mansion now flaunts its walls; and presently there is the stump of a cross beside the paved way to the ancient church yonder. Narrow grows the way, grass carpets it from hedge to hedge, a gipsy's van stands in a sheltered spot, and soon the lane vanishes on the hillside. But not for long; a little way ahead it continues a broad green track upon the down, part of an ancient road

¹ *The Idler out of Doors* (Walter Raymond).



11. A NORFOLK BROADLAND SCENE.



12. THE WHITELEAF CROSS, PRINCES RISBOROUGH, BUCKS.

first trodden out by the feet of wayfarers of whom we know nothing, and then broadened and beaten still more firm by the herds of oxen and sheep which were driven by easy stages along it to the town.

Then a wayside stile makes its insistent call, for unknown foot-paths are the portals of romance. Perchance they are the way from church to monastery or a short cut from village to town. The slumbering country towns are as attractive as the countryside which surrounds them; in the centre is a roomy market-place once regularly filled by the sheep that made it flourish, and there are quiet streets of Georgian houses in which some gentle heroine of Jane Austen might dwell. Many paths debouch upon a village green where we can rest awhile and watch the passing hour. Close by is the village inn, before which grows an oak encircled by a wooden seat, beloved of the villagers as of their grandfathers before them. The landlord tells us that once upon a time it sheltered a prince who lost his way when hunting. Not far away, beside the brook that runs down the valley behind the inn, is the "old ancient" mill, now rotting to decay.

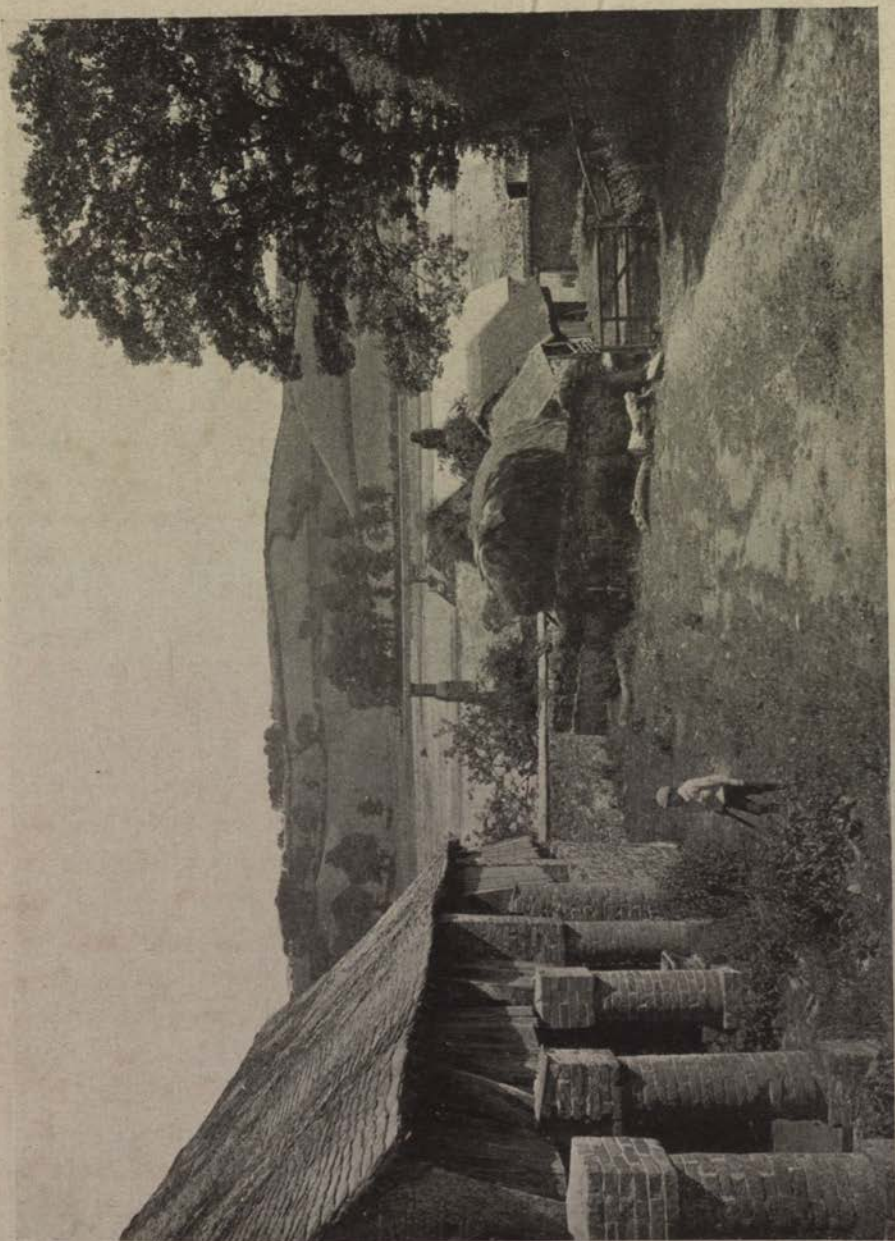
The green may be so small that no inn offers hospitality to chance wayfarers, and then we must perforce beg for tea at one of the cottages. While the good wife revives the fire on the open hearth by aid of the bellows we can look round the neat kitchen and note the household gods, the humble heirlooms of "fair" china, a brass pan perhaps, and the old-fashioned utensils of the home. If we be lucky her husband, the shepherd, comes in before we have finished, and as the evening wanes we accompany him to his little hut on the hillside. On the way he tells us about the fields and points out those which have been enclosed in his time, and instructs us in his lore. As we accompany him on his round of the sheep-fold he tells us of the joys and sorrows of his life, of its pleasures and its hardships, of the passing of the seasons and the work each brings in its train, and of many other things only known to those who dwell in close communion with Nature.

In this manner one feature of the countryside after another arrests our attention, each only one of the countless details of

the whole, but helping us to understand and interpret its story. When standing on an escarpment of the hills, gazing across a wide-spreading plain, we do not see each tree, every road that winds from one hamlet to another, all the spires that peep above the green, or count the innumerable fields, but pick out a few outstanding features that appeal to us and so convey to our mind an impression which is more vivid than if one by one we catalogued all that our eyes rested upon.

So is it hopeless to try to represent the great mosaic which forms the countryside. We can but take fragments as they present themselves, odd and disconnected they may be, but perhaps they help us to understand the whole and lead us to find out more for ourselves. So might we pick up the multi-coloured threads of a beautiful piece of weaving, and, learning how each goes to form the intricacies of the delicate pattern, gain some glimmering of the part each plays. There are sombre threads, too, all too many perhaps, but when the sun is shining the more brightly coloured reflect his rays, while the dark ones absorb the brightness, and for this reason we prefer to think of the country on a sunny day in spring or in the mellow light of a summer's eve when we look forward hopefully to the brilliant days to come, or, toil and hardship forgotten, rest in contentment at the end of the day.

By thus picking out some of the many aspects of rural life we may understand something of the peace it can bring, why so many of England's great sons have yearned to gaze upon her once again before they died, and why her writers, penned in the great towns, have sung of the beauty and contentment of the country. In fact we might apply to England the tender words of Moses when he said: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley."



13. OLD FORD FARM, BIDEFORD.



14. WOODY BAY, LOOKING TOWARDS COUNTISBURY, NORTH DEVON.

II

THE BULWARKS OF ENGLAND

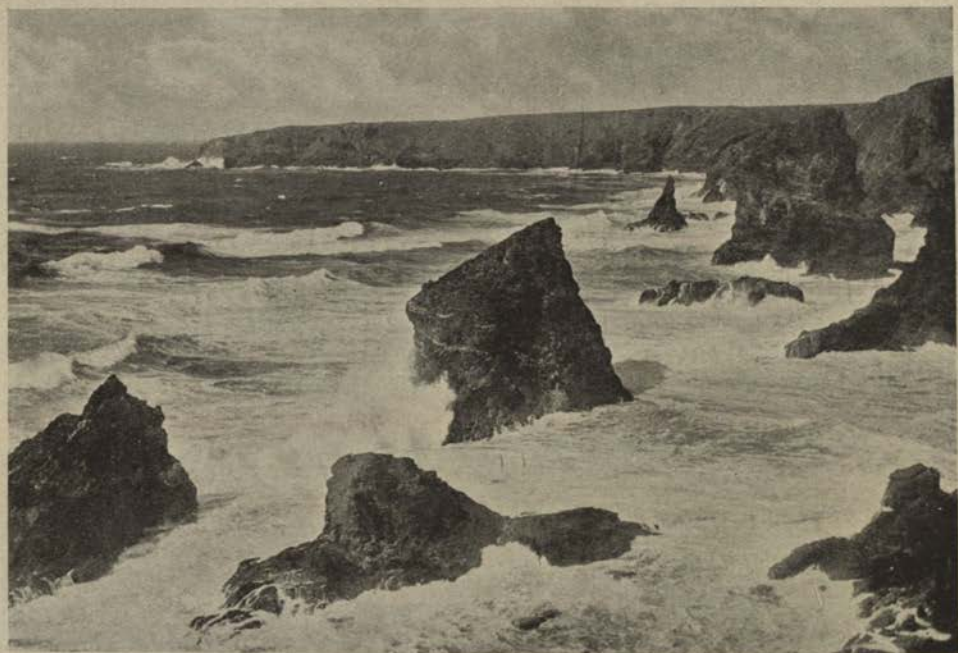
WELL may the cliffs of England be regarded as her bulwarks, for the foes who have once made good their footing on her coasts have usually been able to overrun the land. Many a spot round our deeply indented shores recalls the memories of those long-vanished days, for if smiling vales and ancient towns speak of peace and prosperity the coastwise borders tell of the making of England both as a nation and a world power. Civil wars have hindered progress and devastated the country only now and then, but the hardy people of the coast are never at rest, for though invaders cease from harrying they have to wage unending conflict with Nature for a living.

The sea has made England great, and even to the landsman she is ever calling, with a voice now soft and low, whispering of the health and rest to be found upon her margins, now with a harsh roar of defiance, bidding him remember that she is still unconquered, and while she aids she can also shatter. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence of the sea upon the destinies of England, and we cannot forget it if we would, for on every hand it is recalled to our memory. Miles away from the shore in secluded churchyards are memorials to long-dead seamen and merchants who extended the influence and trade of this little Island kingdom, although it is round the coast that the records are so plain we cannot fail to read. Here is the landing-place of the first invaders mentioned by authentic history, the Romans ; there came to shore the first of the Teutons ; and so from almost every headland we look upon some sheltered beach, some little port which has seen the arrival or departure of a leader who has had his influence on our Island story.

It is the coast, too, that begins the story of the conversion of England to Christianity. According to tradition the faith was first brought by Joseph of Arimathea, who landed on the shores of Severn Sea ; and all along the western coasts are legends of the Irish saints, who, long before St. Augustin landed in Pegwell Bay to convert the men of Kent, came over to restore the Faith which had lapsed. We may find the chapels of these saints here and there, as at Perranzabuloe, in Cornwall, where the remains of the oratory of St. Piran still exist half buried in the sand. On many a cliff overlooking the sea and on islets off the coast are disused or ruined chapels, once the resort of seamen and fishermen. Church towers were marks by which mariners steered to port, an office which they perform to this day in many places, as at Newhaven, and the Northam of *Westward Ho* !

Many estuaries and broad beaches call up memories of the time when the dreaded Scandinavian sea rovers laid waste the land, leaving traces of their descent in names of villages or legends of great fights. Near the Yorkshire coast we find barrows named after the Danes, showing how the memory of their perpetual raids still persists, for the earthworks are doubtless far older than the Northmen. Up and down the Bristol Channel we come across their traces, a field-name which recalls their defeat, a stone marking the death-place of a chief, an islet where they retired after a repulse. In later times foreign invaders, such as the Huguenots, came as friends, welcomed to a peaceful asylum from tyranny abroad, leaving descendants who to this day may be picked out by names or complexion. One or two small hamlets are said to be peopled with families whose forebears were cast ashore from the wreck of an Armada vessel, but there are not so many as popularly supposed. The martello towers of the south coast recall the days a century ago when England expected a descent by Napoleon, and in some farmhouses an old musket or a rusty sword on the wall belonged to a grandfather or a great-grandfather who enlisted in one of the Volunteer regiments raised at that time.

The little ports, too, are full of interest. Decayed now, they



15. BEDRUTHAN STEPS, CORNWALL.



16. CRACKINGTON COTTAGES BY THE SEA, CORNWALL.



17. SILEX BAY, FLAMBOROUGH.



18. COAST EROSION AT HUNSTANTON.

have little to recommend them save their picturesque houses and their history, though in their time they were as important as Liverpool or Southampton to-day. Ages ago, Ictis (Cornwall or the Isle of Wight) traded with the Phœnicians, then commerce flowed to the south-east when the Cinque Ports held pride of place. Next, East Anglia came into prominence when exchange was made with the Flemings and the Hanse towns, and there are many records of Yarmouth captains being misused by sailors from the German ports, who treated our traders as some of the "Fowey Gallants" treated the French. Complaints were made to the King, who replied that he was at peace with his brother of France, whereupon the unmannerly Cornishmen are said to have sent back his messenger with a slit nose. No monarch could stand such an affront, so the leaders were captured by strategy and the men of Dartmouth sent round to break the power of the little town. When America was discovered the western ports flourished, as many fine Jacobean buildings bear testimony, but since the era of the mammoth steamship their importance has waned.

To the romantically minded these little havens are full of interest. Delve into their mouldering records or turn over the pages of some forgotten pamphlet and we find stories of many an unremembered enterprise, many a gallant fight between a local privateer and a foreign man-of-war. They bred a hardy race of seamen who made Britain great ; sailing to the ends of the earth in their frail cockleshells, in which few to-day would like to cross the Channel, they made the name of Englishman feared abroad, and left as memorials their names on many a far-away cape and island. Some little ports have seen the landing of a claimant to the throne or welcomed the arrival of a deliverer ; their people, gathered on the surrounding hills, have watched in sullen silence a raiding enemy land to burn their homes and then hurry off, retreating before the hastily gathered defending force could strike back.

Tales of the smuggling days cling to almost every sheltered cove and estuary of our coast, where are dark cellars and cunningly contrived hiding-places for the reception of contraband. Only a

few years ago many old men could tell exciting stories of their youthful adventures, but few with first-hand knowledge remain. In Lowestoft is a legend of a daring exploit by a French lugger. The Excisemen had got wind of the landing, and awaited her arrival, much to the disgust of the smugglers. At length a lugger appeared, approached the shore, and lowered a boat. When it was beached it was found to contain a coffin, and a Frenchman explained in broken words that an English member of his crew had died at sea and expressed a wish to be buried in his native soil. Being near the coast the captain had decided to honour his last request. The tender-hearted Excisemen thanked the foreigners for their kindness, and attended the burial out of sympathy, but when night had fallen the coffin was raised and its precious contents removed to a place of safety.

The marshy shores of Essex favoured the smuggler, and many an illicit cargo from Holland was safely landed amid its myriad creeks. The seawalls, built to keep back the tide, helped the trade, for the smugglers could unload behind them unseen, while to keep a look-out the Preventive men would have to expose themselves by standing on the wall. The Blackwater estuary was a favourite haunt of the "free traders", who could land in the Salcott creek and take their cargo to Tiptree Heath. A marshy coast pierced by many channels is as convenient for smuggling as the steep clefts of a rockbound shore. Poole is convenient in the former respect, and was a great nest of smugglers; quite recently a forgotten *cache* was found on the heath behind it. Kent and Sussex, too, found the trade lucrative, the former county being famous for the "owlers" or wool smugglers of Romsey Marsh. In this case goods went in the reverse direction, wool, of which the export was forbidden, being sent to France, and here as elsewhere churches were used as repositories for contraband.

At Mupe Bay, near Lulworth Cove in Dorset, is a genuine smuggler's cave, and others may be found in Devon and Cornwall. The Preventive men themselves are said to have received toll in

return for learning a cargo was being run miles from the place it was actually put ashore, and the clergy were not above profiting, according to innumerable stories from Kent and Sussex and Cornwall. Polperro, in Cornwall, was one of the villages that waxed fat on smuggled goods, and not far away was said to be a farm with a movable duckpond, beneath which was a cellar. At Kilve, in Somerset, was also a hiding pool, and it is sometimes stated that the Chantry near the shore was accidentally burnt down by the smugglers. Epitaphs in country churchyards tell us of smugglers who were "murdered" by the Preventive men, and one of these at Talland, in Cornwall, utters a prayer for him who did the deed.

Blood-curdling stories of pirates will be heard, of those who had their headquarters on Lundy, of "cruel Coppinger", of Harry Page of Poole who plundered the French and Spanish, and others. There are stories, too, of mermaids and "monstrous fishes", and records of terrible storms which have eaten up acres of land. But the coast of England is continually being washed away there and added to here. The remains of forests laid bare at dead low tide and the legend of lost land, such as Lyonesse or the estate of Helig between Anglesea and Carnarvon, are proof of this, if we did not know that to-day the coast of Holderness in Yorkshire is fast disappearing into the sea, and that Spurn Head is continually changing its shape. Several villages and towns of East Anglia have been swallowed by the waves, and in places Dorset is slipping into the sea. In other parts there are gains to set against these losses; land has been reclaimed round the Wash, and on the Somerset coast, in Kent and East Sussex, while Dungeness grows yearly.

Many who give not a fig for ancient story and care nothing for the past rejoice in the fair landscapes the seaboard presents. To them the coast is a perpetual delight with its great headlands; its acres of marshland, the haunt of innumerable sea-fowl; and its dainty little coves carved out of the cliff. Here the rolling downs bordering the sea look down on a reed-fringed estuary, and there a fishing village is huddled in a rocky cleft so narrow it seems one might jump

across. In places, rills run down little valleys to lose themselves in the stones of the shore, and elsewhere on a wide sandy sweep the breaking waves sparkle in the sun. Maybe a long finger of land juts into the sea like Flamborough and the peninsulas of Cornwall, or the natural bulwark of a cliff shelters a peaceful bay.

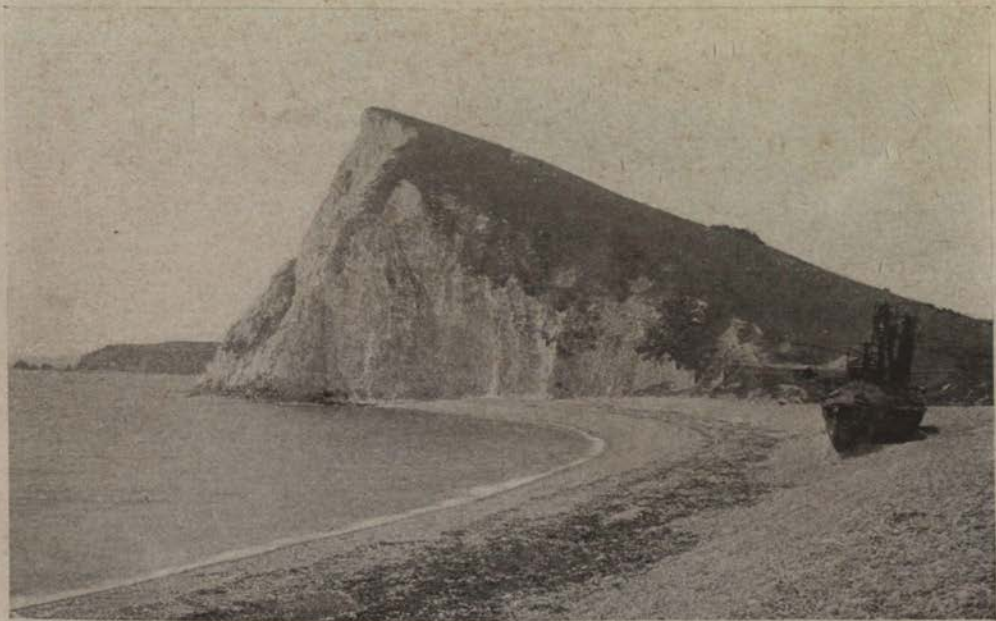
There are miles of almost deserted coast sloping to the water, covered with a tangle of gorse and fern and undergrowth, where the badger has his home and whence the fox makes his nocturnal raids. In such spots in favoured parts of Cornwall nests the rare chough, in which the soul of Arthur is embodied; perhaps it has grown so rare because this is a materialistic age in which the knightly soul of the legendary king has no place. If tired of the sheer white cliffs, veined with flints, of Kent and Sussex, the verdure-clad chalk of East Devon comes as a pleasant change. For some there are the craggy shores of Yorkshire or Northumberland, while others are content with the crumbling sandstone of East Anglia or the deep red walls of Devon; the sand-dunes of Lancashire are not without attraction, or even the muddy waters washing the oozy shores of the Severn Sea; but best of all are the granite cliffs of Cornwall and the towering seaward hills of North Devon, where the clothing of verdure sweeps unbroken to the waves.

But every coast is beautiful in its own fashion. In the tangled undercliff we can find treasure of wild flowers and see how the rain undermines the rock until one day it falls with a crash, adding another to the many natural gardens of our land. If we be landmen we can obtain some inkling of the perils of the sea by venturing along the Coastguard path in a gale, or picking our way carefully to the end of the headland when a damp mist shuts out the landscape, and the eerie hoot of the foghorn booms through the still air.

If we choose our stand we can see the sun, a dull red ball, sink lower and lower, opening up the hazy silhouette of headland after headland, until it finally sinks below the last, and sky and sea melt into one another, the last swallow wings its way to its nest, and the muffled cries of the gulls come only at long intervals.

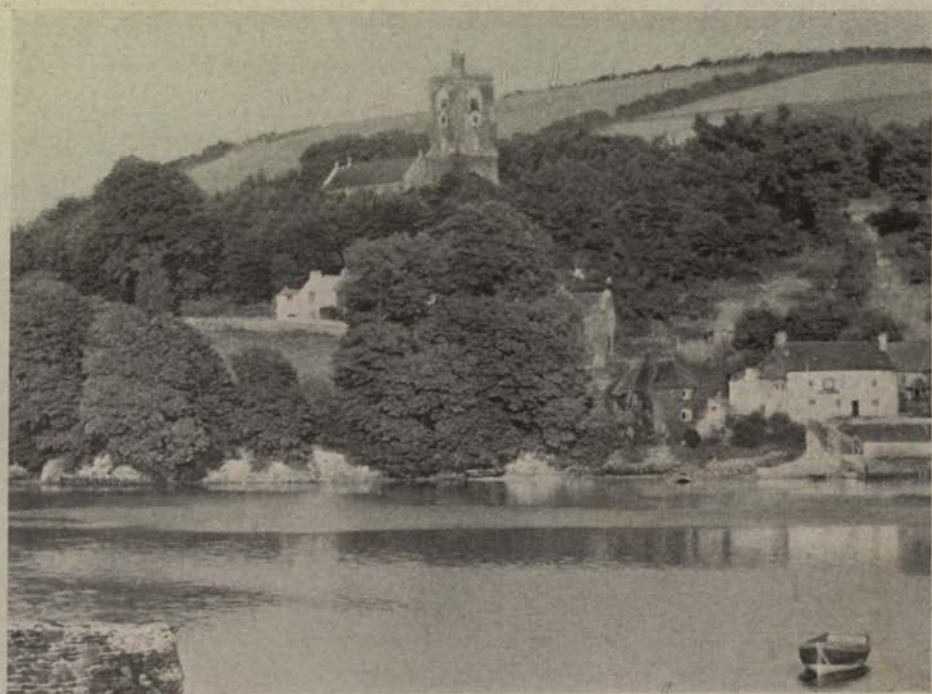


19. SAND-DUNES ON THE NORTH WELSH COAST.



20. ARISHMELL GAP, WORBARROW BAY, DORSET.

The dark object is an early submarine washed ashore



21 AND 22. TWIN CREEK VILLAGES IN DEVON : NEWTON FERRERS AND NOSS MAYO.

III

UP QUIET CREEKS

IN these days of hurry and bustle, of crowds and noise, it is good to turn aside to visit the quiet places where the tide of life still runs gently and peacefully, where the day's work though hard and long is carried through without undue haste and turmoil. Better still are those tranquil spots where Nature holds sway almost undisputed, where man comes but seldom, and where his handiwork has done no more than impart some final touches, as it were, subduing wild disorder and giving that atmosphere of appropriate occupation which adds so greatly to the charm of rural scenes.

Such places may not be easy to discover, but when in search of them we turn our steps almost instinctively towards some quiet creek branching out of a busy river or pushing its way between the hills that border some fiord-like estuary. Great ships may be passing to and fro along the main stream, but only at long intervals does a little coasting schooner turn into the creek at high water or a boat come up with the tide, bringing supplies for the village hidden in the valley where the hills run to meet one another. Here we may indeed shake off our workaday cares and worries, for there is nothing to mark the passing of time save the ebb and flow of the tide, the passage of the sun overhead, and the movement of the shadows. Perhaps the ships may be seen afar off as they move across the line of water between the banks at the mouth of the creek, but they appear so remote they might belong to another world.

Even if the banks are dotted by the cottages of a large village

the same air of remoteness is ever present. The sloping tree-clad hills which enclose the creek seem to meet at a turn and effectually shut in the village. But the coming of the tide brings with it a cool whiff from the sea and tidings from the outside world. As the gently lapping waters cover the mud and sandbanks they set afloat the boats that lie stranded for most of the day and cause the tree-trunks moored here and there to tug at their chains ; and then the busiest hour of the day begins. Back with the flood come the one or two little local fishing-smacks, the broad row-boats that carry on the commerce of the place, and one or two skiffs containing visitors. Perhaps, too, up the creek in slow and stately fashion sails a barge, bringing stone or coming light to take away the tree-trunks that have waited long. For an hour there is much adoing. Carts from neighbouring farms and villages drive up to take away what has been brought in, and load the boats with something to take away. In this one is a sailor with his bundle, about to join his ship ; in that a young girl is accompanied by her relatives to see her start for her first place. Her box is hoisted aboard with care, the boatman shows her where to sit, and surrounds her with baskets of produce from the farm, and when all is ready the boat is pushed off and slowly rowed away, while she waves her handkerchief to friends on shore until the village is lost to sight round the bend.

If it be evening the work of the day finishes with the going of the boats, and then the inhabitants come out to enjoy a row before the creek once more becomes a muddy expanse with a thin trickle of a stream down the middle. The boys bathe in quiet corners, and the children play about at the edge of the water. The setting sun is mirrored in the glassy surface of the slowly receding tide, and the reflections of the trees and cottages assume fantastic shapes on its gently undulating bosom. The barge settles down slowly, with mast aslant, beside the half-loaded pile of wood, and soon with the ebbing of the waters the quiet aloofness of the creek returns.

For the loiterer who loves to get away from his fellow-men to



23. A MARSHY CREEK, HAYLING ISLAND, HAMPSHIRE.



24. LOW TIDE AT MALDON, ESSEX.



25. A CREEK QUAY AT NOSS, SOUTH DEVON.



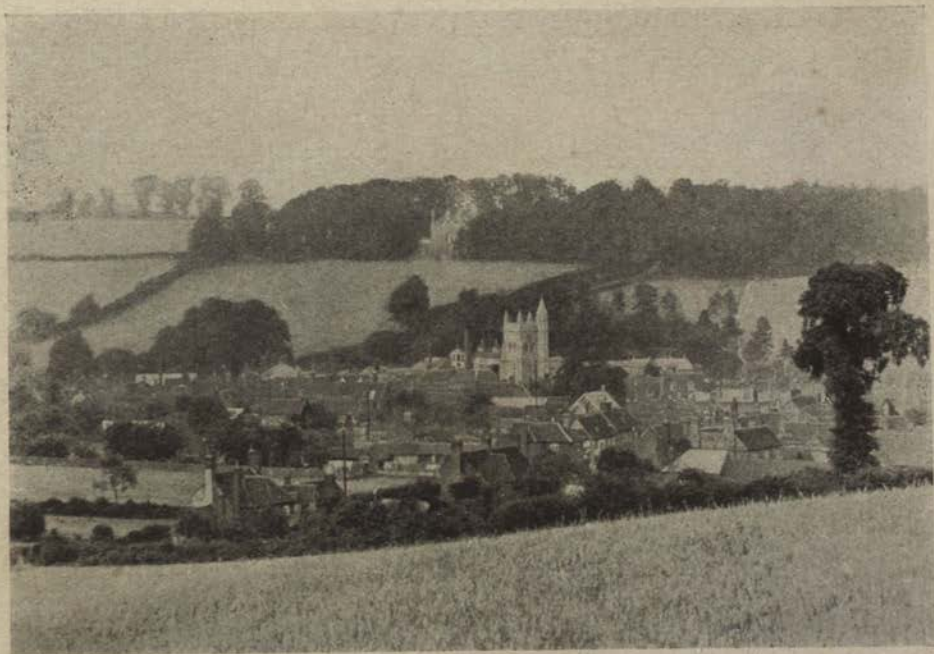
26. THE HAMLET AT HIGH TIDE : BATSON, SALCOMBE.



95. THE WAY TO THE CHURCH, AYLESBURY.



96. WEOBLEY, HEREFORDSHIRE.



97. A CHILTERN TOWN : AMERSHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



98. LUDLOW FROM WHITECLIFF, LOOKING TO THE CLEE HILLS.

spend some hours amid what is miscalled the solitude of Nature there are the windy creeks of the marshes whose reed-fringed shores are often hard to reach. Close to the town they may be, but the stranger will lose himself amidst a maze of ditches surrounding the fields on attempting to reach them from the high road, and even if successful he will find it still more difficult to retrace his steps, especially if he linger too long and darkness falls. The wise man embarks in a light skiff at flood-tide and rows to the desired spot, running the nose of his boat into the bank, so that it is left high and dry when the water ebbs. Here he may remain undisturbed for hours, watching the birds and the clouds, and listening to the ripple of the water and the rustle of wind in the reeds. Essex has scores of such creeks, some almost within a stone's throw of a town or village, but so little frequented that they are as solitary as those which wind amidst the marshes where the only habitations are lonely farms or isolated cottages. Where Sussex meets Hampshire low peninsulas and capes jut into the shallow waters of Chichester and Langston harbours, forming many a creek and channel beloved by the sea-fowl if seldom visited by man.

These marshland creeks are not always solitary, without sign of man, for sometimes a lonely road debouches on a miniature quay, beside which are moored two or three boats. Although the grass-grown quay seems little used, the well-kept boats and gear show that somewhere along the road must be a fisherman's cottage or two, probably hidden by the clumps of bushes dotted about. At high tide the water laps the quay and the boats are afloat, but for most of the time they lie high and dry some distance from the channel, which flows lazily through the ooze. Occasionally may be found, perhaps, a small oyster bed, separated from the creek by a low embankment, the inflow of the water regulated by rough sluice gates of wood; or maybe a windmill works the pump, which prevents the low land behind the creek from being flooded. Salterns, too, may be seen, but as a rule these little local industries have fallen into decay; the sluice gates of the oyster beds have rotted

away, the windmills are mere creaking skeletons, and the salterns are almost unrecognisable, for even the district demand for home supplies has ceased.

Thus, sometimes we can read the story of the past in these quiet creeks, especially in those deeper ones that open out of some estuary. Here is a well-built stone quay, with rusty mooring rings half hidden in the long grass; a tumble-down wall and a post or two are all that remain of the sheds that once were full of merchandise. A short way up the road leading from the quay is a decaying village, once a not unimportant port. There are tiny building yards, now completely deserted or perhaps with a small yacht or coaster upon their slipway; very leisurely do these craft grow, but there are yachtsmen who will tell you this is an advantage, and that vessels turned out in this slow fashion possess more seaworthy qualities than those which come from busy yards in big seaports. Inquire into the history of these secluded, little-known yards, and you will sometimes learn that in bygone days they prided themselves upon the stout vessels they constructed for the Navy, some of which have won an undying name in our annals. But that was long ago, for as ships became bigger trade went to more convenient ports, and these creeks with their tiny yards and miniature quays were left to dream of their past and be satisfied with an occasional order for a small cutter or sailing boat.

Other creeks can also tell of the past, of boats of refugees flying from a cruel invader, of kegs buried by the aid of shaded lanterns on dark nights. Such are the visions conjured up by the maze of creeks surrounding Poole Harbour, that lagoon set amidst a sandy heath. When the Danes and later raiders came to Poole it was easier for the townsfolk to take boat and escape into the heath by the winding creeks than to toil up the hill behind the town. On stormy afternoons, when dark clouds sweep across the sky, it would be difficult to find spots more desolate than these creeks separated by low sand-hills covered by scrub. Seen from Ballard Down the dark patches of ground between seem no higher than the

silver threads of water, but the heath is very undulating, and the folds shut in each creek so completely that when standing on their shores one feels alone amidst a sandy waste far from civilisation.

Best of all are those creeks which open out of every estuary and every inlet of the West Country. The hills which embosom them are clad to the water's edge in trees where the herons nest, and the tidal limit is denoted by the straight line of branches cut off by the sea. Here and there the line of trees is broken by a low cliff or a tiny beach where foxgloves grow, and sometimes at the head cluster the cottages of a hamlet. Great masses of valerian grow from the walls of the thatched whitewashed cottages, and lichens and ferns cover the outbuildings. As a rule, however, only a cottage or two will be scattered here and there on a level strip of ground, or a mill beside a brook. These are built of local material, and so weathered that they have merged into their surroundings, of which they seem to form a part; the only signs of life are a black pig or two rooting about and splashing through the water, and some ducks rejoicing in the mud, but in the evening the children come out to play, and a thin column of smoke ascends from the chimney.

In these quiet creeks one can loiter all day undisturbed. A few men may be seen at work in the fields, and perhaps at low tide a solitary horseman picks his way along the narrow bridle-path that descends the hillside and crosses the creek by a causeway of weed-covered stones. Here, across the brook which threads its way down the centre of the creek at dead low tide, is a slippery plank bridge for pedestrians, but the timid among the few who come this way will go all round by the beach, fearing to trust themselves upon it. There is always a firm beach of sand and shingle beneath the low cliffs, covered only at high tide, and occasionally this serves as a short-cut for the butcher boy on his pony or the farmer, but as a rule the wayfarer has the creek to himself. He can lie in the shade of a disused lime-kiln and dream away the day, listening to the low murmur of the water and the purling of a brook that comes down the hillside and splashes on the beach in a little cascade. Just

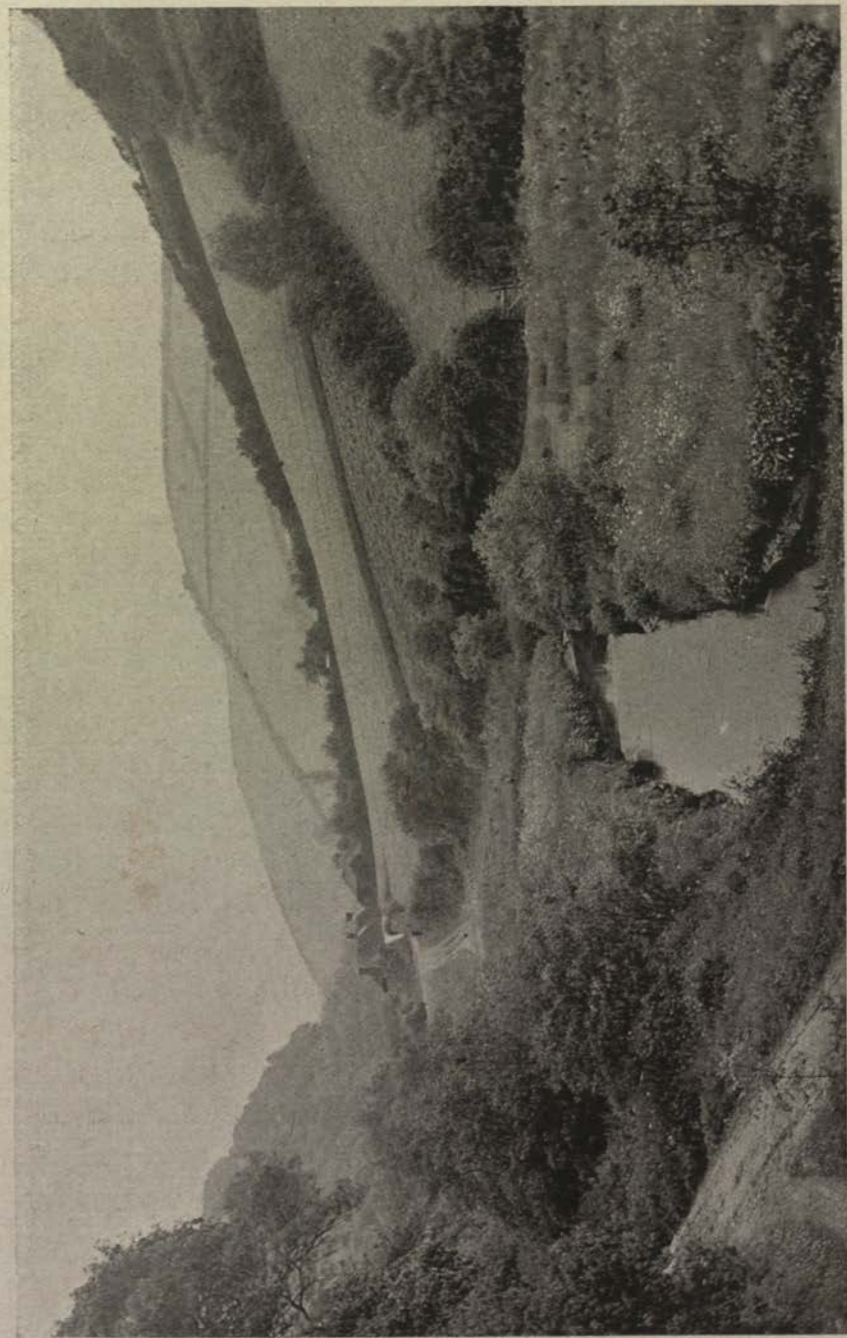
across the way stands a heron motionless until something disturbs him, when he rises slowly and takes his flapping flight to the wood lower down. Gulls splash about in the pools and shriek joyously, while* busy on the sandbanks are a number of rooks whose plumage looks very sombre by comparison. The swifts scream overhead, and the swallows flash above the wet sand and the pools, now and again sending a ripple across the surface of the still water. One of the swans which haunt these estuaries will make a slow and stately pilgrimage up the creek so far as the tide permits ; if he belong to this especial creek he will land for an elaborate toilet, if not, he merely looks in on a passing visit.

Then there comes a whisper in the bushes, a sudden whiff of fresh salt-laden air, and a little wave which curves into a tiny breaker across the creek. The tide has turned. Slowly it comes up in soft eddies, filling the depressions and running between the weed-covered boulders. The oncoming waters overcome and dam back the brook, which soon overflows its channel and spreads over the ooze on either side. Slowly but irresistibly the water rises, covering the lower part from shore to shore, advancing on the flat expanses of sand apparently without movement, and breaking over the rocks in little runs and splashes—the stakes for the nets, which formerly stood up tall and gaunt, show how the water deepens.

With the flowing of the tide the air grows cooler, and the accompanying salt tang of the weed overcomes the sweeter scent of the honeysuckle. And so without haste, almost noiselessly, but steadily and irresistibly, the tide flows on until it fills the creek from end to end. The reek of wood smoke from the cottage mingles with the salt into a scent which the most skilled perfumer cannot hope to equal, and as dusk falls the rising moon inlays a silver pathway over the waters of the creek.



27. ON THE ORWELL ESTUARY, NEAR IPSWICH.



28. IN THE VALLEY OF THE WEST LOOE RIVER.

"The stream that, as with molten glass, inlays the vale."

IV

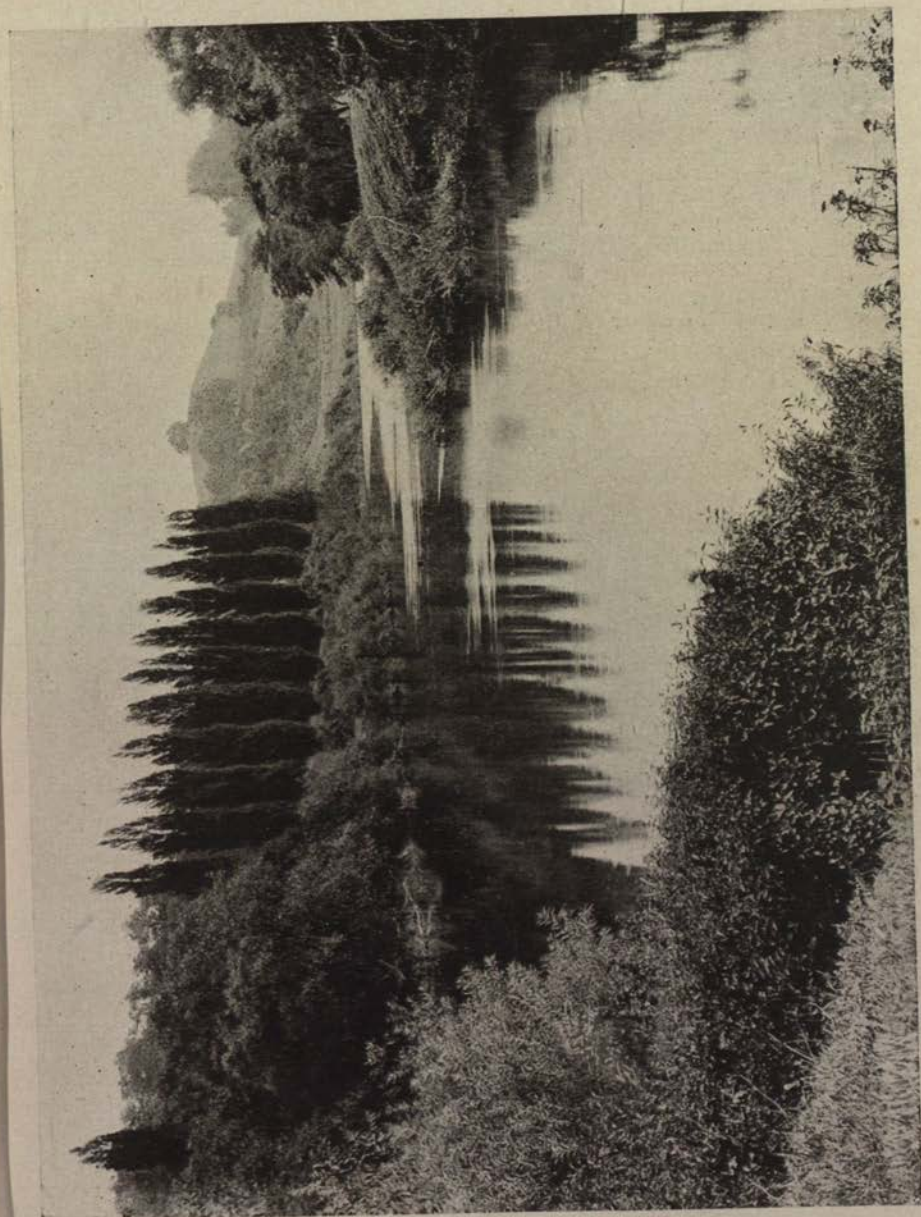
RUNNING WATERS

WHAT sound in nature can compare with the singing of a noisy stream as it hurries down its stony bed towards the sea? The regular rise and fall of waves upon the beach, the souging of wind in the trees, the song of birds, and the hum of insects are all phases of Nature's incomparable music, but the melody of running water possesses the greatest charm of all. There are beautiful sounds which pall after constant repetition, but the song of the stream is never quite the same, although it does not cease for a moment. From the almost imperceptible tinkle of the tiny moorland brooklet to the roar of the waterfall or the river in flood, the voice of running waters calls with an insistence that cannot be ignored by those who understand.

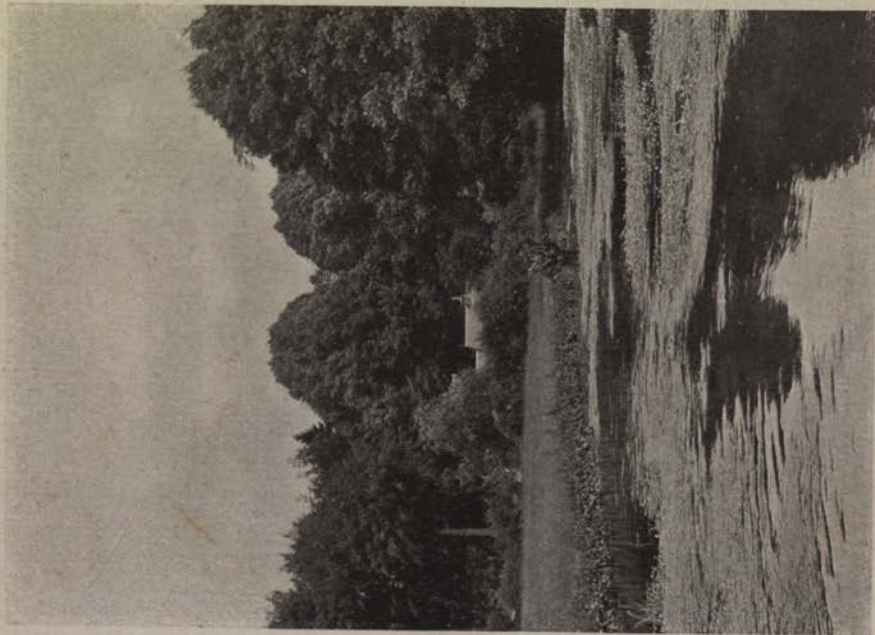
All who would know the charms of the river's bank should follow some swiftly flowing stream from where it rises on the moorland to its final meeting with the sea. At first it speaks in a childish treble with a voice that is hardly audible amid the breezes of the hills, but as it speeds on its way the volume of sound increases. It tinkles over the stones in its channel and splashes into little pools, each rivulet that joins it adding to its strength. Here a tiny fall, there a placid reach, anon a swirling eddy in a miniature gorge, it quickly covers the first few miles of its course as if anxious to get beneath the shelter of the trees. And so it hurries on, until its waters are strong enough to drive a mill, and then, perhaps, it loses its identity in a broad placid stream flowing through flower-bedecked meadows dotted with cattle.

Every stream, however small, has a character of its own. There is the fussy brook, whose course is a series of sharp bends ; it reminds one of a person pushing his way through a crowd, buffeted hither and thither as he goes. It progresses by irregular rushes, and always appears in a flurry. Then there is the joyous rivulet that seems to skip along singing, in sharp contrast to the river whose current is so sluggish that water-lilies cover its surface and weeds clog its bed. Midway between comes the deep river, that neither hurries nor goes slowly, whose waters give one the impression of resistless purpose and never-failing determination. Is it surprising that the ancients endowed the rivers with a sentient personality and often regarded them with a superstitious awe ?

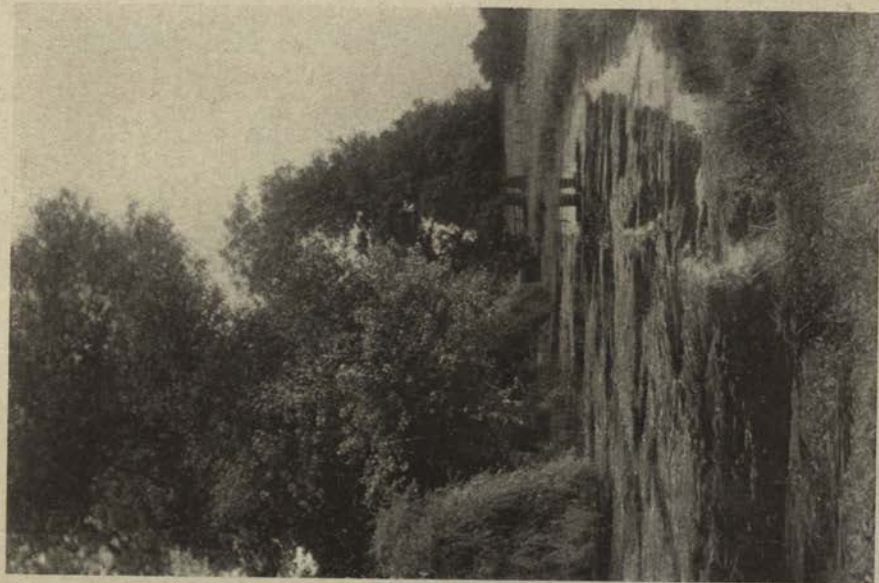
Even nowadays this feeling has not died out completely in some parts of the country. The old-fashioned people of Dartmoor still regard its most famous river with dread, and talk of it as a living being. To "hear the Broadstones crying" is said to be a sign of rain. Those who have heard the peculiar wailing sound which is caused by the wind blowing down the valley will understand the awe in which it was held in the days of long ago. Amid the rains of winter it is not surprising that this cry was interpreted as a demand for sacrifice, as it is usually heard before one of those sudden floods to which the river is subject. But the Dart is not the only river whose voice is said to be almost human. One stream meets the sea by a narrow channel between low hills, and under certain conditions of wind and tide, when the stream rushes up the narrow estuary in a foaming flood, a strange weird cry echoes from hill to hill. On a stormy evening, when dark clouds scud across the sky, the wayfarer, making for the narrow plank bridge or the ford beside it, may well hesitate ere he ventures to cross. Scientists may be able to explain the phenomenon, but the countryman will tell you it is the cry of warning uttered by an evil-doer of long ago who expiated his sins by being drowned on this very spot when hurrying to fetch a priest for a dying woman. Ever since, when the conditions render the crossing dangerous, his spirit returns to enact once more the only



29. THE "TWELVE APOSTLES," ON THE SEVERN.



30. A CHILTERN CHALK STREAM, THE CHES.



31. THE THAME AT LOWER WINCHENDON.

good deed that is counted to his credit, a deed that took his life but brought him salvation.

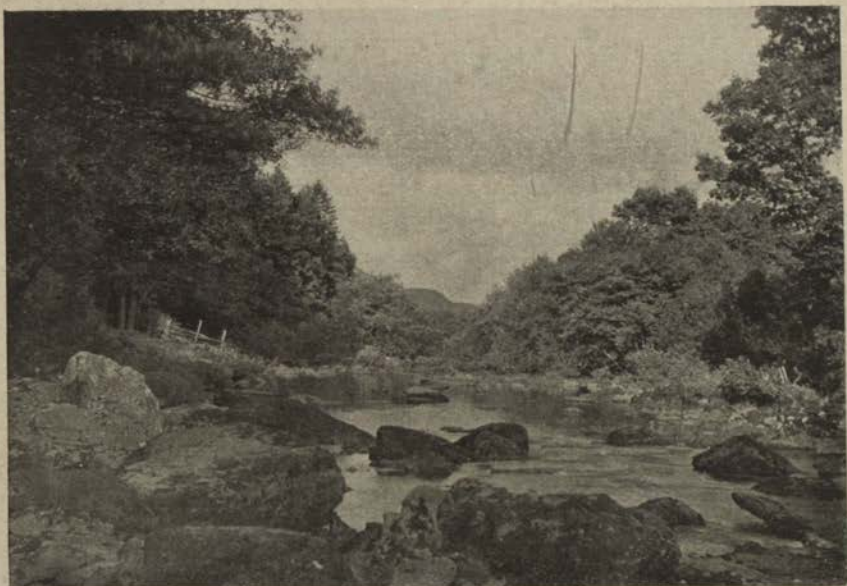
It is easy to account for such superstitions of the river ; all who have walked beside a rapid stream that flows over a rocky bed know the harsh roar of the waters in times of flood and on days when the clouds are heavy and lowering. Stand by that stream on a bright summer's morning when the blue sky is reflected in the few unbroken patches of calm water, and listen to its song. As it foams over its stones it seems to be singing joyously ; sometimes its voice is little more than a musical tinkle, sometimes one hears a deeper note as it tumbles over a low fall, but always there is the joy of living in its tones. But when the weather changes, when the wind shrieks over the moor, a difference will be noticed. The soft tinkle becomes a roar of menace, a deep vibrating bass that speaks of relentless power and cruel purpose. Little wonder then that a superstitious peasantry still believe the legends of the malign influence of many streams.

Every lover of the waterside has his favourite stream. One prefers the mountain torrent, whose voice is never still except during times of exceptional drought, when a tiny stream trickles down the centre of the rocky bed, here and there forming little pools of half-stagnant water. Others tell you that a broad river flowing between low banks thickly fringed with bulrushes is unequalled, but they are usually the lazy ones who like to retire into some sheltered backwater and dream away the day beneath the shade of an overhanging tree. Some again maintain that a stream is best of all whose fall is so slight that the current hardly flows. They like the cool green of the water, the broad splashes of water-lilies and the water-crowfoot that grows in the miniature bays formed by the crumbling banks. Each man to his taste, of course, but surely nothing can equal the charm of the woodland stream ? On a hot summer's day what can be better than to leave the glare of the open for the cool depths of the wood through which it flows ? The green of the trees rests the eyes, and

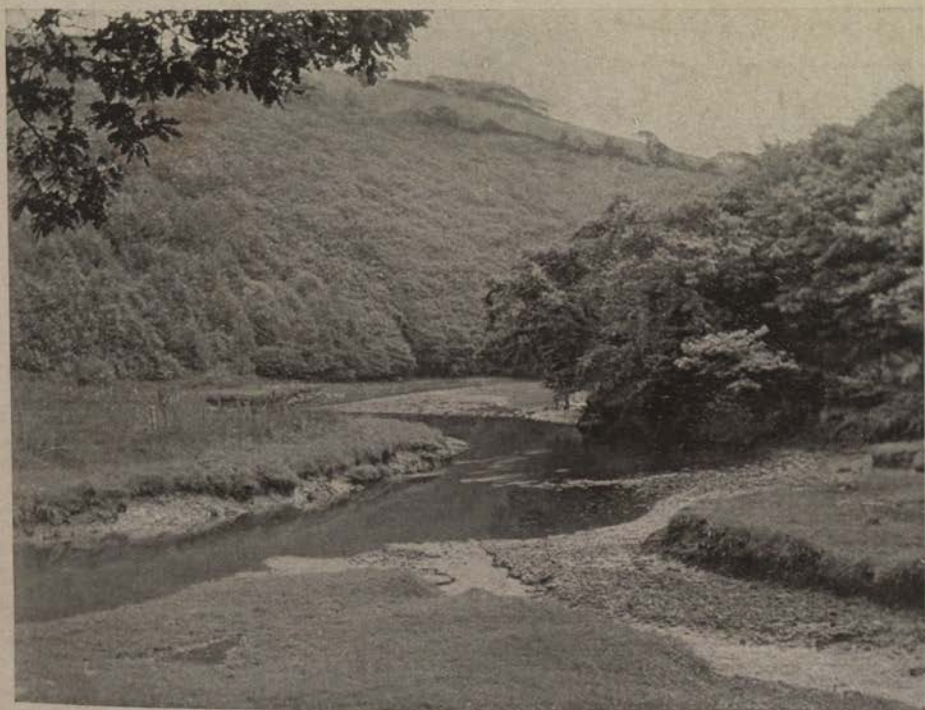
the gentle murmuring of the waters soothes the senses, so that all else is forgotten, and the wayfarer lingers long after the time he should be going. In the pools the troutlets splash, while now and again the flash of a kingfisher is reflected in the waters. If one keeps very still, one can watch the dipper on a stone in midstream, while the wagtail is seldom far away. The song of the birds and the hum of insects mingled with the sound of the running waters sing a lullaby that no musician can hope to equal. And when half the afternoon has been drowsed away in the cool sweetness, the idler can look about for the wild flowers which grow in rich profusion just beyond the stony beach that marks ordinary flood-limit—forget-me-not and marsh marigold, the bog pimpernel, perhaps, and all those plants that like damp places. Just above yonder bank is a clump of elders, whose green is splashed with white masses of blossom in late spring and early summer. June, on the banks of a woodland stream, amidst the hills of England or Wales—can the world find its equal?

Many idlers, however, maintain that no part of the river is so full of charm as the reach where the tidal stream is felt and the air is fresh with the sharp tang of the sea. Sometimes the river opens out into a broad salt lake a mile or two above its mouth. In such circumstances it often meets the sea through a narrow gorge beneath cliffs, or by a channel cut through high banks of shingle. Such are the Axe and the Otter, rivers of East Devon, great banks of shingle having silted up their mouths and closed what were once little havens, so that now the pent-up waters enter the sea beneath high cliffs, so swift and shallow being the current that no boat can enter. A few of the smaller streams do not reach the sea at all in the ordinary way, but lose themselves in the shingle, through which they filter.

It is difficult to say where some rivers enter the sea, for long estuaries eat their way into the hills, and at low tide the river proper meanders from side to side through the mud or sand. Those who wish to cross must either wait at one of the fords, some-



32. A RIVERSIDE SCENE ON THE LLEDR, BETTWS-Y-COED.



33. "A QUIET STREAM 'MID HILLS OF DOWNY GREEN."



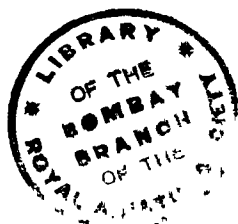
34. PONT ABERGLASLYN.



35. STEPPING STONES NEAR AMBLESIDE.

times marked by posts, until a cart comes along, or make a detour of several miles to the first bridge. Where time is of no consequence, the wayfarer should wait for the chance farmer's gig or wagon that seldom make their appearance, for the gentle lap of the tide, the changing play of sunlight on the surrounding woods and water, and the coming and going of the birds can only be enjoyed to the full when one thinks of the hour merely because of the changes it brings.

Even if one cannot do without the companionship of one's fellow-men the stream need not be deserted. Up on the moorland the angler may be watched, while lower down the miller will often lean over the open hatch of his door for a chat. Then there are bridges where the village idler spends half his day, and the little beaches beside them where the horses come to drink when their day's work is over. Nearer the sea come primitive quays, where coasters unload coal or ship great trunks of timber brought from the neighbouring woods. Often the mouth of the river forms a little port, on whose pier the longshoreman will entertain all who will listen to him. But it is the murmuring of the waters rather than his tale that attracts us.

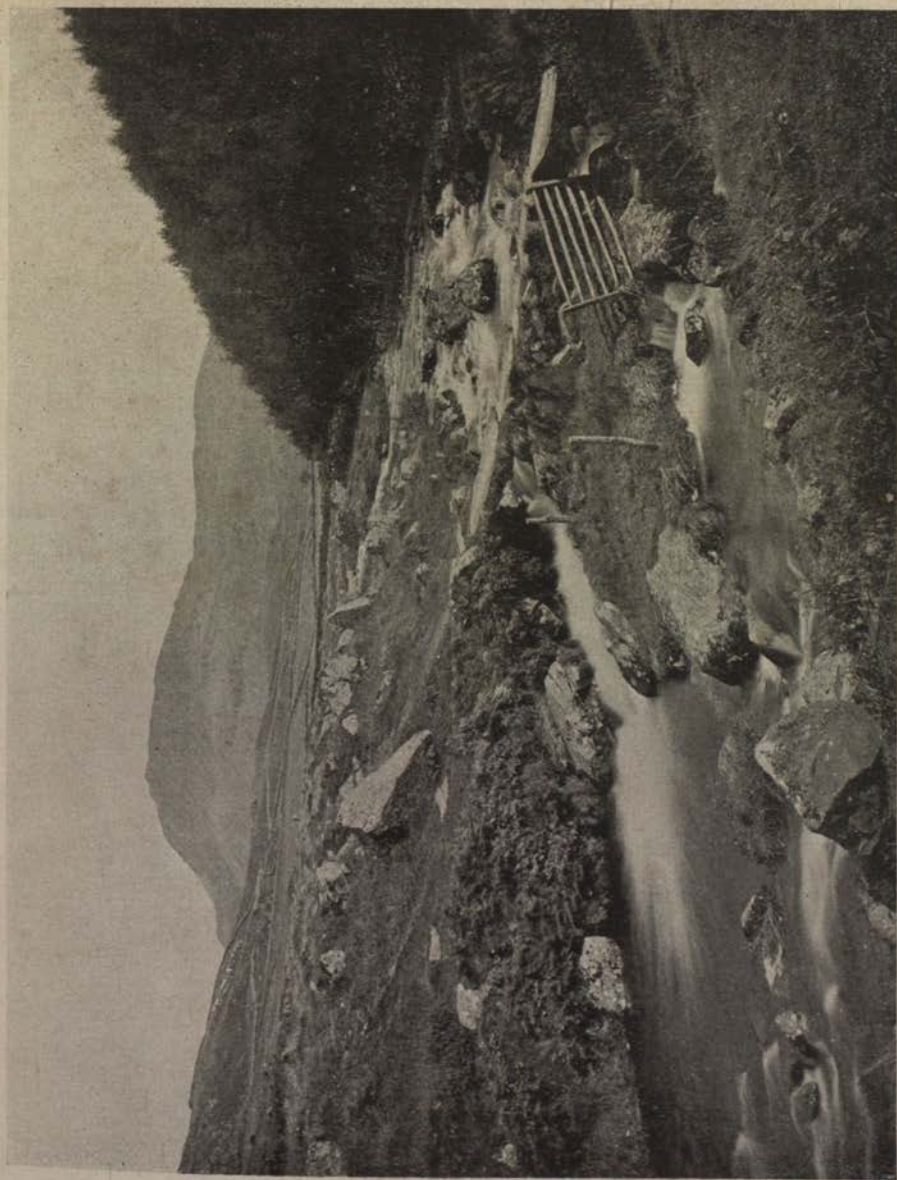


V

FORDS AND CROSSING-PLACES

IN bygone ages rivers liable to sudden flood often formed the boundaries between districts inhabited by neighbouring tribes, for they were obstacles not easily crossed, and even where the shallows made a natural crossing it could only be undertaken when conditions were favourable. When the tribes were not on friendly terms there was danger of being overwhelmed by the waters and opposing warriors. Perhaps it is long dormant instinct, a relic of those far-off times, that causes us to this day to regard the crossing of a ford as somewhat of an adventure. Only those on business bent who use a ford every day of their lives hurry across without looking to right or left or taking stock of the surroundings. Not so the casual wayfarer who comes on it unexpectedly ; he will almost certainly linger a while to look about him, to observe floodmark if the stream be an inland one, or to note how high the water comes up the posts that mark the ford if it cross an estuary.

If the stream be shallow pedestrians cross by stepping-stones beside the road, while the little watersplash has usually a wooden footbridge. It may be the brook is so tiny that a single slab of stone serves as a bridge, or there is a ford over a wide estuary, up which the tide comes swiftly, overwhelming horse and driver if the crossing be delayed. Equally dangerous at times are the fords across moorland streams liable to sudden spate in wet weather. A sunny morning, on which the river flows rippling across the road, may give place to a cloudy afternoon, when heavy showers sweep the hills. Suddenly up the valley is heard a roar, and a foaming wall of water rushes down in irresistible flood, carrying all before it.



36 A STREAM CROSSING NEAR CADER IDRIS.



37. A STAKED FORD, AVETON GIFFORD, DEVON.



38. FERRYING ACROSS THE HARBOUR AT FOWEY.

One afternoon, after a heavy shower of rain, a farmer was driving home across a moor with his wife. Hardly had the horse entered the water ere the roar of the coming torrent was heard ; quickly turning his horse the farmer essayed to regain the bank, but it was too late—the foaming waters swept away horse and trap. Many days later the trap was found floating beneath a bridge some miles down the vale, and the bodies of the farmer and his wife were recovered from some bushes beside the now tranquil waters. Another swiftly running stream in a deep valley beneath high hills is crossed here and there by fords, with stepping-stones for the foot-passenger. Two labourers were returning home one evening when they heard the flood-waters roaring down the cleave. Anxious to get over before the spate rendered the ford impassable they raced down the hill, and the foremost man passed in safety, but the second was too late ; when his comrade looked round he was alone, the despairing cries of his companion being lost in the noise of the swirling waters which overwhelmed him as he crossed.

Dangerous as can be the ford across the moorland stream at certain seasons, the danger is as nought compared to that faced when crossing the shifting sands of some wide estuary, some shallow inlet left bare at low tide. Then the traveller must needs take note of wind and sky and seek guidance from one who knows every patch of quicksand and can read the warning signs that tell when the passage must not be attempted. It may be that one side is high and dry and the guiding line of posts stands clear, but before half the way has been covered the oncoming waters flow up a deeper channel on the farther side and bar the way. Then the traveller, hastily returning, may find his retreat cut off, so that unless help is at hand or he is a strong swimmer he is swept away.

Formerly there were several of these ways across sands at low tide, but reclamation schemes and bridges have rendered many of them unnecessary. In these days, few, perhaps, make their way across the sands to Lindisfarne with its many memories of St. Cuthbert. A long line of posts marks the way, part of which is seldom dry, and for the benefit of belated travellers who may have

delayed, their crossing, crows' nests are placed at intervals as refuges from the rising tide. As a rule, however, the passage is made by means of carts, which must not idle by the way, for there are sands in which the wheels might sink. Best known of all is that long dangerous track from Kent's Bank to Bolton-le-Sands across Morecambe Bay. Along its shores one hears tragic tales of men overtaken by the tide, of foolhardy wayfarers lost in the quicksands because they refused the service of the guide, and of carriages which almost lost the way in the mists which sometimes creep in from the sea. Cartmel churchyard contains many graves of those who lost their lives while essaying the passage. In the days before the Reformation, Cartmel Priory supplied the guides, and afterwards official guides were appointed.

Even more famous in history than the Morecambe crossing is the passage of the Wash, in which, as every schoolboy knows, King John lost his baggage. Here there were also quicksands, and a guide was necessary, but successive reclamation schemes so shortened the passage across the sands from Cross Keys to Sutton Crosses that the guides lost their work a century or more ago, and now few who cross the spot in a swiftly moving train are aware that here, in the oncoming waters and quicksands, disappeared the last remaining hopes of that unpopular monarch.

Across the creeks between the numerous marshy islands on the Essex coast are many fords passable only at low or half-tide ; tall poles at intervals mark the way, and the pedestrian crosses the channels through the mud by slippery stepping-stones or causeways pierced with holes to allow the water to pass through. Only those who love the marshes call them picturesque, and on an autumn day, when a drifting sea-fog shuts out the landscape, they can be very eerie. The only sounds are the faint ripple of the little channel, and now and again the mournful wail of a gull, or maybe the long-drawn hoot of a steamer feeling its way up the river not far away. The wayfarer seems utterly alone ; his eyes strain into the mist, seeking the opposite shore, and he peers around as if expecting the waters to rise suddenly before he can get across.

Such fords appeal only to the few ; the many prefer the row of stepping-stones across a stream sparkling in the sunlight and dappled with the shadows of overhanging branches. Here the wagtail flits from stone to stone, and the white shirt-front of the dipper or the sudden flash of a kingfisher may be seen. When the lumbering farm wagon passes, the horses stop a moment for a drink, and the cows on their way to be milked linger so long that the small boy in charge has no little difficulty in urging them forward. All who love the stream-side have their favourite stepping-stones ; those on the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey, perhaps, or some in Wales, Yorkshire, the Lake Country, or elsewhere. One of the oldest crossing-places in the country is at Torr Steps over the Barle a few miles above Dulverton. It is some 180 feet long and 4 wide, flat stones being placed on other stones or piers, making a broad path. Its builders are unknown and therefore legend has gathered round it. According to one the devil built it in a night and sat at one end to claim the first that crossed. To outwit his Sable Majesty an unlucky cat was sent over and with it he had to be content. Another says that when Hawkridge church was being built a mason was carrying across the ford a load of stones which the devil caused him to drop, thus forming the causeway.

Where inlets of the sea or estuaries stretch long fingers of creeks into the surrounding hills, causeways for use at low tide are constructed. When people of the villages in the vicinity wish to go abroad they wait until the tide has fallen in order to avoid long detours necessary at other times. Many of these causeways are to be found in the south-west of England, where they are sometimes called fosses or vosses. At the twin villages of Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo, on what must surely be the most beautiful creek in Devonshire, are two, a short one at Noss and a long one across the main creek from Noss to Newton which cuts off a long mile.

Ferries are not so old as fords, in fact, many ferries have superseded fords, while in their turn ferries have given place to bridges, and thus the romance of travel is fast disappearing. A ferry adds

a spice of adventure to the most commonplace journey, for it recalls the days when communication was not easy and the traveller might be sure of meeting difficulties by the way. How pleasant it is on a hot day to come down a long winding hill to a little slipway on one of the wooded banks of the stream. Just beside it is an inn where the traveller waits in the cool stone-flagged parlour while the ferryman fetches the oars.

If there be little a-doing the ferryman is always ready for a chat that is usually full of interest, for it would seem, as is really fitting, that most ferrymen are old. Slow of speech, objecting to hurry, their movements are methodical, and should the wayfarer be on the opposite bank an elaborate preparation has to be carried out before the boat is pushed off. In places the road ends abruptly where there seems no ferry, and on inquiry a labourer at work in a field points to a cottage two or three hundred yards from the opposite shore. No one is in sight and it is only after repeated shouts of "fer-ry" or "over", the ferryman's hail, that a figure emerges from behind the house and walks leisurely down to the water. Where a village straddles a ridge on a certain river as famous as it is beautiful, the road debouches on a little open space where stands a bell with a seat beside it; if the ferryman is not on the same side the waiting passenger rings the bell until he comes over.

Some ferries consist of ugly and unromantic if useful "floating bridges" which run on chains; these are usually found near a town where traffic is heavy. But where the crossing is not very busy a flat-bottomed float with drawbridges at either end is used for carts and animals. The ferryman rows to the float anchored off the shore and brings it to the slip. One of the drawbridges is let down and the cart gently driven on; then up goes the end again, the ferryman takes one long sweep, the carter another, and with occasional soothing words to the horse the float is slowly rowed across. It may be that the ferry does not go straight across a stream, but connects two villages some distance apart, so at stated intervals a little launch plies from one to the other. Then the crossing is a pleasant little trip, so that the journey is all too short



39. ARLEY FERRY ON THE SEVERN.



40. RUXLEY WATERSPLASH, EPSOM.



41. THE "VOSS" OR CAUSEWAY AT NOSS MAYO AT LOW TIDE.



42. AT THE EDGE OF THE MOOR,—HARFORD BRIDGE ON THE ERME,

if the river be picturesque. Such a ferry is that between Starcross and Exmouth on the Exe. In days gone by the ferry rights belonged to the Abbey of Sherborne—ferry rights were often granted to abbots—and the name is a corruption of Staircross, a cross having stood beside the stairs to the ferry.

When time hangs heavy on the hands what can be better than loitering by some ferry or ford? Now there comes a wagon piled high with hay, the wagoner turning into the Passage House or Ferry Inn to wait until the ford is passable or a ferry-boat is ready; now a farmer splashes through the water beside the poles marking the ford; anon come two teams of woodmen, each with a great trunk slung between the wheels, or a heavy trolley with stone from the quarry a mile up the road. The ford or the ferry often throws unexpected light on the industry of a district. There is one picturesque ferry heavy with the odour of strawberries in their season, and then, a week or two later, in the afternoon come carts and traps laden with baskets and tubs of raspberries, carefully weighed before being put in the boat which takes them to the waiting carts on the slipway opposite.

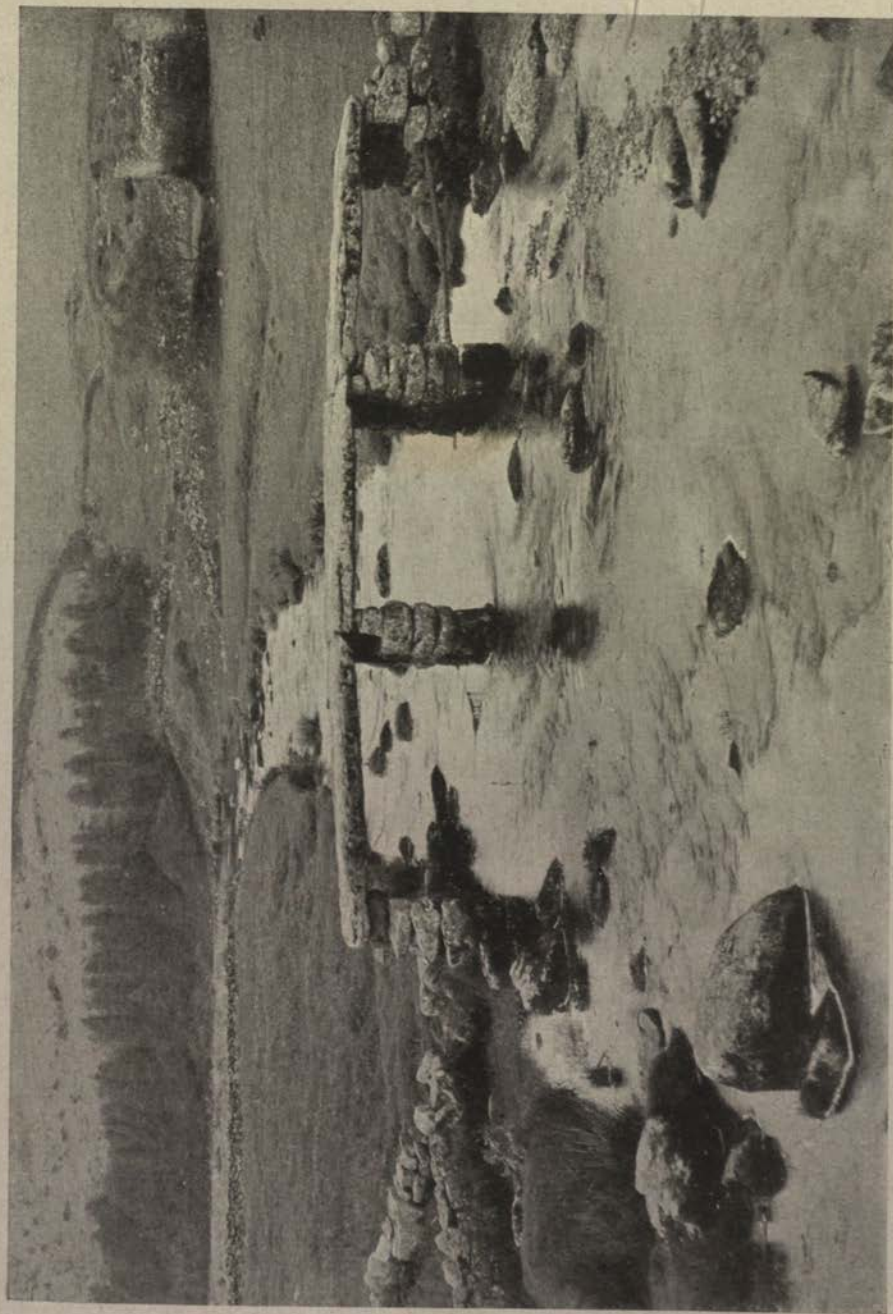
If you would understand something of the weirdness of the unknown, come suddenly on an unexpected ford on a pitch-dark night. The traveller comes out on a piece of open shore, and the poles beside the ford loom ghostly through the gloom; there is that curious noise of water running through the spongy turf, and the splashings and cries of the waterfowl sound unearthly through the silence, broken only by the barking of a dog. A shout brings no response, for the place is lonely and the people in the farms have long gone to bed. When the echo of the shout has died away the silence is only more intense; nothing can be heard save that ghostly ripple and the wailings of birds unseen in the darkness. It is a "weird and whisht" experience, and as the benighted traveller ascends the hill, preferring the long hard road to the dangers of the unknown ford, he seems to feel the branches of the trees overhead waving in triumph at his defeat.

VI

ANCIENT BRIDGES

HE who really understands the art of idling is always ready to turn aside from his direct road to spend a pleasant hour or two loitering on some old bridge. There is an allurements about the parapet and an enticement in the seductive call of the waters that are impossible to resist. Of course it would be little short of a crime to loiter beside the ugly railings on some modern monstrosities of bridges, but to idle by the lichen-grown stones of an ancient bridge is indeed half a virtue in these hurrying days. Fortunate are those towns and villages that possess such a structure, for when the day's work is done he who has earned his right to rest can come forth to join his fellow-men. Here, amid a cloud of tobacco smoke, the gossip of half a county passes from lip to lip; for each horseman, each carter, that comes that way must stop a few minutes for a chat.

It has been whispered that many men are better acquainted with the most comfortable leaning-places of the bridge than with their own fireside; but what matters that? is not a husband in the way when household duties are toward? Is it not better to gossip in the open air than in the clouded atmosphere of the inn parlour? And after a hot summer's day the air is cool by the bridge. And he who loves to loiter on the bridge must needs be a philosopher, for there is little to do but talk and think. Bridges would be a valuable adjunct to existence if they filled no other purpose than this. Philosophers are all too few, and that which helps to make them is to be regarded with favour. The noise of the water



43. A "CLAPPER-BRIDGE" IN A MOORLAND SETTING, POST BRIDGE, DARTMOOR.



44. NEWBY BRIDGE, WINDERMERE.

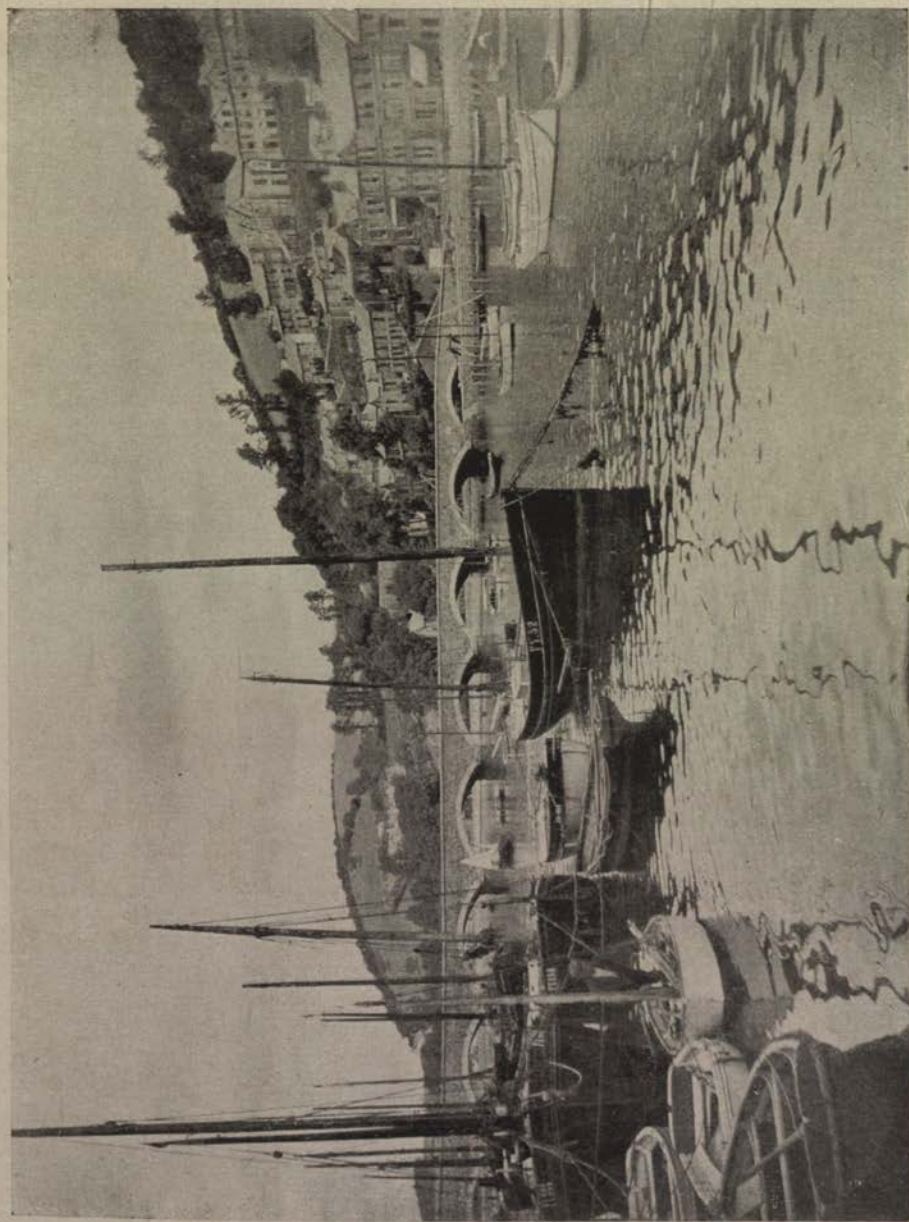
swirling through the arches soothes the nerves, the fresh cool air brings life to the lungs, and bridges are usually placed in a picturesque setting that delights the eye. Therefore, whenever we have the chance, let us join the throng who have worn smooth the stone parapet of the bridge.

To an imaginative man there is a glamour about bridges that is absent from other structures. Their very shape proclaims their approximate age and their probable builders. In the old days to build a bridge was an act of piety, and many an old sinner, rich according to the age in which he lived, has, so far as this world could say, brought peace to his soul by building some necessary bridge. In those times philanthropically inclined merchants did not found free libraries, but left their money towards the upkeep of a bridge. Bishops and priests, sad at heart because of the toll taken of their flock by some swift-flowing stream at a difficult crossing-place, would go on a pilgrimage to raise sufficient funds to build a bridge in place of the dangerous ford. Thus, here and there, we come across a grand old mediæval bridge that owes its erection to the action of the parish priest. Wadebridge, in Cornwall, has a fine example to show. In the fifteenth century Thomas Lovibond, the vicar of Egloshayle hard by, was deeply distressed at the loss of life at the ford ; the pent-up waters of the Camel rushed up the narrow channel in a bore, and many were swept away as they essayed the crossing. So Lovibond obtained permission from his bishop to raise funds for a bridge, and the work was put in hand. But it was long ere success was reached ; the shifting sands made a poor foundation, and the priest feared the work would never be carried through. Then one night he dreamed a dream. In his vision an angel drove some sheep to the riverside to be shorn, and as the fleeces fell into the water they floated across to the opposite bank. On awakening he interpreted the dream, called the farmers to his aid, sank bales of wool in the sands, and upon these foundations raised the bridge. There are those who say the foundation of wool is merely a poetical way of

saying that it was the profits of the local wool trade that provided funds for the building of the bridge. Be that as it may, bales of wool have been found buried under the piers of other bridges in similar situations, and more recently bridges across marshes have been erected on bales of brushwood.

Therefore it is easy to understand that he who built a bridge was regarded as a public benefactor, and prayers for the repose of his soul were offered up. At Abingdon the bridge built in 1389 was connected with the Brothers of the Holy Cross, who maintained a priest to pray for the souls of John Huchyns, Geoffrey Barbour, and Sir Peter Besils, who were responsible for its erection. Chapels were frequently erected on a bridge, so that the wayfarer could stop awhile to pray for the founder. There is one on the bridge over the Calder at Wakefield, but it is only a replica, so far as the front is concerned. The original was removed in 1843, when the building was restored. There is another at Rotherham—which, by the way, was once used as a prison—and yet others at the ancient towns of Bradford-on-Avon, in Wilts, and St. Ives, Huntingdon.

As a general rule bridges arose close to fords of which they took the places. We find the same tendency at the present day. Many a picturesque little watersplash with a footbridge beside it is giving place to an ugly utilitarian structure of iron capable of bearing the weight of heavy traction engines, while the streamlet itself, which flooded the approaches in bad weather, is confined to its own channel, often a rectangular kind of conduit of concrete. The old bridge-builders, however, looked for beauty as well as utility, and even those massive structures, built at strategic crossing-places, are beautiful to look on. In times of unrest and civil war the contending forces would endeavour to seize the fords and bridges to hinder the advance of the other side. As a consequence the approaches to important bridges were often fortified; sometimes a castle that stood close beside them would command them effectually, while in other cases a strong tower was erected at the end



45. THE BRIDGE AT LOOE.



46. A WEST COUNTRY CLAM BELOW CLOUTSHAM.



47. THE BRIDGE TOWER, WARKWORTH, NORTHUMBERLAND.

of the bridge itself. A fine example of such a bridge may be seen over the Monnow at Monmouth, while at the south end of the bridge over the Coquet at Warkworth stands the lower portion of a fortified gatehouse which would require a deal of forcing.

No one can say which is the oldest bridge in Britain. Some will state that the famous "clapper" bridges on Dartmoor can claim a greater antiquity than any others, but many there are who maintain that these primitive structures, consisting of one or more long slabs of granite, do not date from prehistoric times, but were originally intended for pack-horse traffic. It is pointed out that it is easy to account for their simple design; monoliths of granite lie all ready to hand on the moor, and piers of roughly hewn blocks could soon be set in place. Whatever the origin of these "clapper" bridges they do not bear such testimony to the great skill of their builders as do those "Roman" bridges which may be found here and there, mostly in the north of England and Scotland. The Romans were great builders of bridges, and have left examples of their work in all those countries which they once occupied. These bridges usually take the form of a great semicircular arch of brick, their chief characteristics being grace and lightness. There is an excellent example on the Calder, near Bothwell, in Scotland, while another is the well-known Devil's Bridge, near Aberystwith. The Saxons do not appear to have done much in the way of bridge-building, although there is one near Waltham Abbey said to have been erected by Harold, and we know that they levied rates for keeping bridges in repair.

It was at the end of the Middle Ages that the golden era of bridge-building dawned in England. All over the country may be found beautiful examples which bear eloquent testimony to the skill and art of their builders. As the country became more settled commerce prospered, and better communications became more necessary. Two fine old bridges among many others may be looked on as monuments to their founders: Clopton Bridge, at

Stratford-on-Avon, and the Long Bridge, Barnstaple. Sir Hugh Clopton did much for Stratford, and is remembered to this day with gratitude; but no one seems to know much about Stamford, a merchant of London, the builder of Barnstaple bridge, although some say it was erected from the proceeds of the original ferry. According to the story commonly told, Stowford, a judge, once saw a woman crossing the marshes to the ford swept away by the rising tide, and in consequence he provided the money for the bridge. But this belongs to the original Pilton bridge across the Yeo, not that over the Taw. The Long Bridge, as the latter is called, is still narrow, although the widening it has undergone does not add to its beauty, neither do the ugly iron railings on either side.

These ancient bridges, unless spoilt by modern improvements, are always beautiful. Lichen covers most of the stone, maybe ferns grow out of the crevices, while at the little beaches by their side the horses and cattle come to drink on their way home in the evening. Sometimes they consist of merely two or three arches, while in those places—notably in the flatlands of north Buckingham, Bedfordshire, and Huntingdonshire—where a meandering river spreads out into a wide marsh, they are half-causeway, half-bridge. Where the channel is narrow and set between hills, so that sudden rises are frequent, the arches are wide and high, the cut-waters being especially massive and strong. Oftentimes a stream forms the boundary between two counties, bridges forming the connecting links. Perhaps, too, such a bridge bears a name given it when it had just been erected, although that is long ago. Such a one is New Bridge, that lofty structure with roomy refuges over its cut-waters that spans the Tamar below Gunnislake, while across the Thames are many bridges which invite one to stop and admire the beauties of two counties.

Ancient bridges are usually very narrow, for traffic, such as we understand it, was confined to a few lumbering wagons, and goods were carried largely by pack-horse. Here and there the

pack-horse tracks are still in existence, and somewhere on their route a narrow pack-horse bridge may nearly always be found ; sometimes three or four occur within a few miles of one another. Another form of bridge may be seen in those simple rustic wooden structures that span a little stream ; sometimes they carry a foot-path over a mountain-torrent, sometimes they form a crossing-place for the pedestrian beside a shallow ford. Such simple bridges of wood are very common in the west of England, where they are always called "clams."

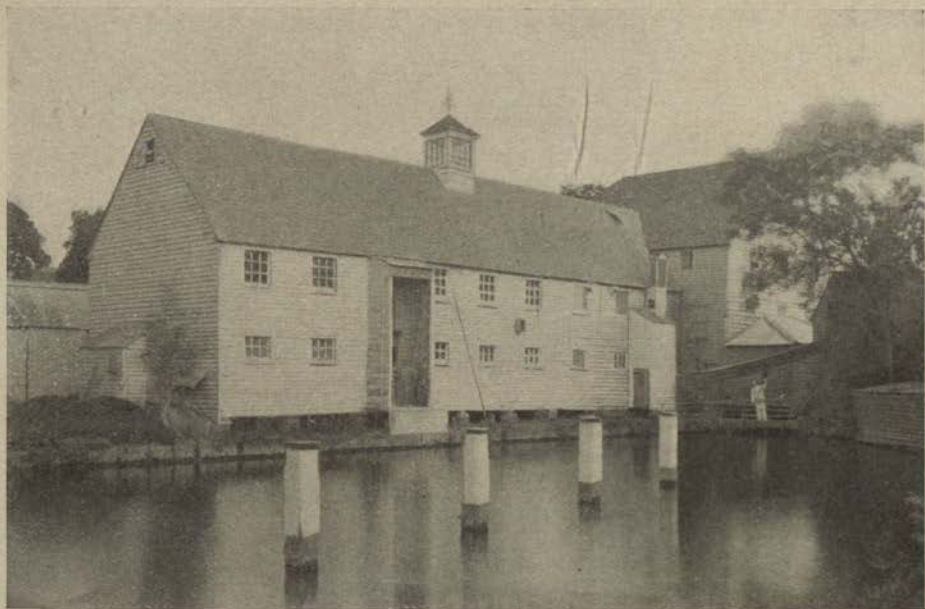
But of all bridges none can compare with those which are thrown across some narrow estuary within sight of the sea. Once one leans on the parapet to look at the incoming tide swirling through the arches, or to watch the fishing fleet put out to sea, all sense of time is lost. They have the attractions of the quay and bridge in one, a combination that forces even the busiest of men to become idlers for once. The cries of the gulls fighting for tasty morsels, the wash of the waters against the piers, and the song of the sea, together form an irresistible force that prevents one leaving the place. Over the parapet, maybe, are draped the nets to dry, and if there is no special work in hand the fishermen are always ready for a gossip. All that enter the little town must cross the bridge, and so it becomes a great meeting-place for those who would hear the latest news. Many such bridges there are in the west of England, although none of them seem so well made for the idler as is that of Looe. Seaton Bridge is more attractive to the angler than the loiterer ; the toll at Teignmouth Bridge keeps away all except those on business bent ; Wadebridge is attractive for itself alone ; the iron railings and the railway bridge make Barnstaple impossible ; while Bideford is plagued by the fly-drivers and char-à-banc men who wish to drive you to Clovelly should you linger to enjoy the view. But the bridge that joins East and West Looe has most of the virtues of all the bridges : a beautiful setting, a comfortable parapet, and fellow-idlers.

VII

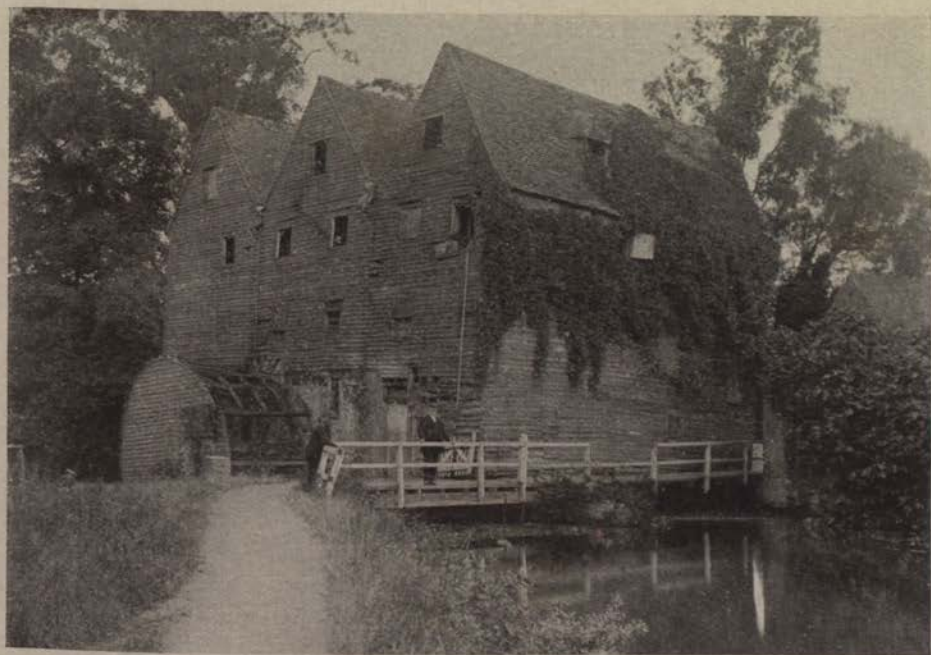
THE PASSING OF THE MILL

WITH the growth and dominance of a rigid and soulless industrialism in the nineteenth century utility came to be considered above beauty and appropriateness, the workman ceased to be a craftsman taking delight in his handiwork and making things which were artistic as well as useful, and became a minder of machinery, a maker of articles to one pattern.

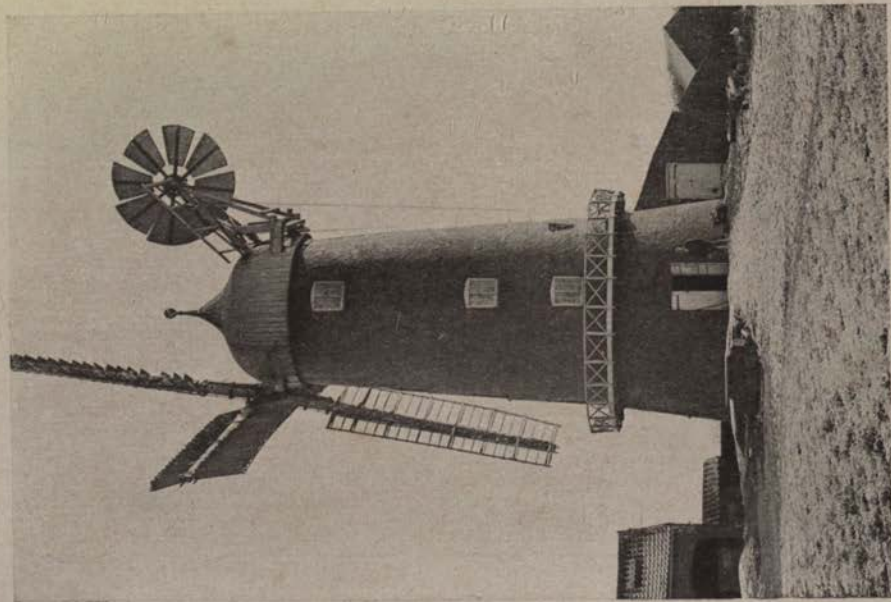
At first the country was less affected than the towns, but as machinery improved it was found that many industries could be carried on more cheaply and perhaps more efficiently in the large factory, and from that day the conditions of life in the country began to change. At first this was slow, but when new countries developed and foreign corn began to pour into Britain it became rapid, and the old crafts decayed, especially those dependent on a well-tilled countryside ; the full effects of this transformation have been felt within the knowledge of those who are yet middle-aged. It seems but yesterday that the merrily turning sails of a windmill formed one of the most characteristic sights of East Anglia or Sussex, and the pleasant splashing and rumble of the mill-wheel one of the most common sounds of our valleys. Now the former have largely disappeared or remain mere limbless stumps to remind us of the past, while many of the water-mills are being turned into sawmills, or even factories, or perhaps utilised to generate current for lighting a country house or a village. This use to supply motive power for dynamos has saved many a mill, and will probably save many more, although for a time, when "standard"



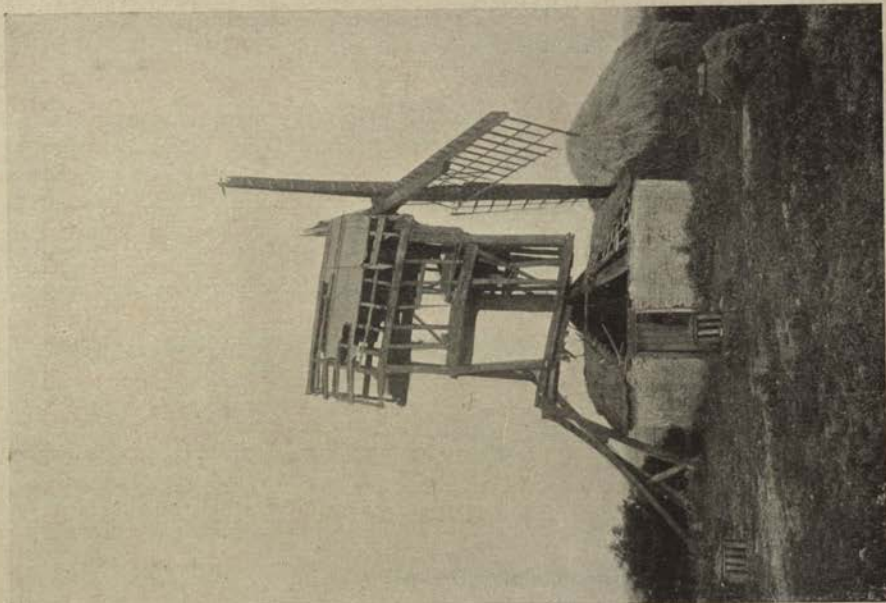
48. HAMBLETON MILL ON THE THAMES.



49. AT GODMANCHESTER, HUNTINGDONSHIRE.



50. AT PATRINGTON, YORKSHIRE.



51. AT MADINGLEY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
"STRONG YOUTH AND DECREPIT AGE."

flour was boomed, it seemed as if the old mills might again be utilised.

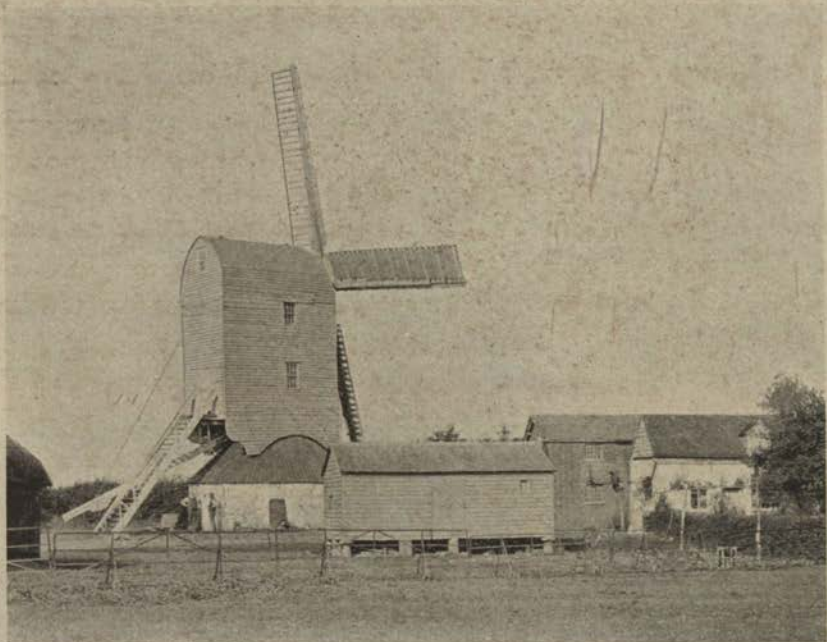
So it is that scattered about the country by many a silver brook and softly flowing river we come across mill-leats which are purposeless, or dams that have no mills, or find some picturesque old building empty and deserted, its wheel falling to pieces and its windows broken. No longer is the miller a jovial gentleman of independent character like him of the Dee, but a man who makes his money by some other trade, or a mere labourer who feeds the hoppers or fills the motor-lorries with sacks of flour ground by huge roller mills in a town or on its outskirts. Few could pass a mill without stopping awhile to watch the wheel and the foaming waters race out of the mill-tail, without passing the time of day to the miller leaning over the half-open hatch by its side. Even where the mill is still working we find the wheel motionless and silent for most of the time, and there is no procession of gaily painted carts filled with sacks of grain or flour and drawn by great cart-horses with brightly polished harness and ornaments jingling musically at every step.

With this passing of the mill goes a feature of English country life that has lasted since Saxon times. It is difficult to say when water-mills were first introduced ; some say that they came with the Romans, but this is uncertain, and in any case hand-mills or querns would probably be in use in their time, as they lasted up to the thirteenth century. That water-mills were plentiful in Saxon days we know by the Domesday Survey, and those who have access to modern editions of, or extracts from, that monumental work relating to their districts may find reference to some mill they know well, although, of course, the present building is not the one referred to and the site may be different. When we conjure up visions of West Ham at the present day it is difficult to think that nine hundred years ago there were eight mills on what were then no doubt the pellucid waters of the Lea ; there had actually been nine at an earlier date. Between Rivenhall and Braxted in Essex

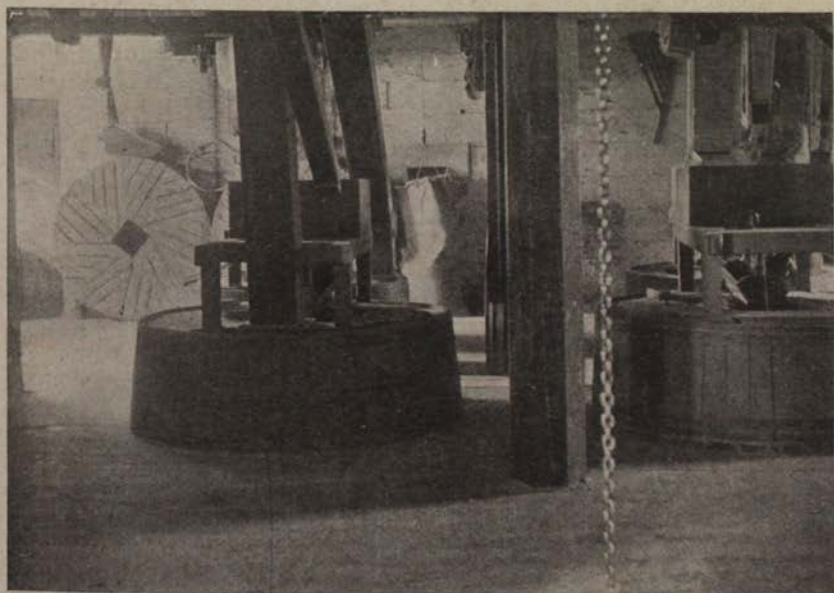
may still be seen a mill that existed in Edward the Confessor's time. It belonged to the two manors and was worth ten shillings annually. On the Thames are several of these Domesday mills, one of the most picturesque of which is Streatley, which was worth twenty-two shillings a year in those far-off days.

One of the most important privileges of the old manors was that of the milling soke, or the right to compel the tenants to grind their corn at the lord's mill. To our notions this may seem unjust and savour of undesirable monopoly, but it must be remembered that the mill was erected as much for the use of the tenants as the lord, who usually leased the mill to the miller. The latter was under the control of the manor court and was liable to a fine if he took too large a toll of the corn sent to be ground or did not grind it properly. As a general rule, too, the use of hand-mills was discouraged, and on most manors the tenant was liable to be fined if he took his wheat elsewhere to be ground or did his grinding at home. It was also the duty of the tenants to do all the necessary repairs to the mill and carry their lord's corn to be ground or to market to sell.

Mills were often the most profitable possessions of monasteries, and the abbots preserved their rights as carefully as the ordinary landowner. The Abbot of Peterborough suppressed the use of hand-mills on his property, while the Bishop of Durham owned three mills. Of one of these the records say "all the villeins and men who hold of the farmer make the mill-dam and carry millstones." The millstones formed the most expensive part of the equipment of the mediæval mill, for they were often imported from abroad and had to be fetched from the nearest port. The duty of purchasing these and arranging for their carriage usually fell to the bailiff, and in old manorial records we occasionally come across the expenses of such trips, from which it appears that the price would sometimes be discussed over liberal quaffings of wine. Numbers of these old manorial mills exist to this day, although in many cases they have long since passed from the possession of the original



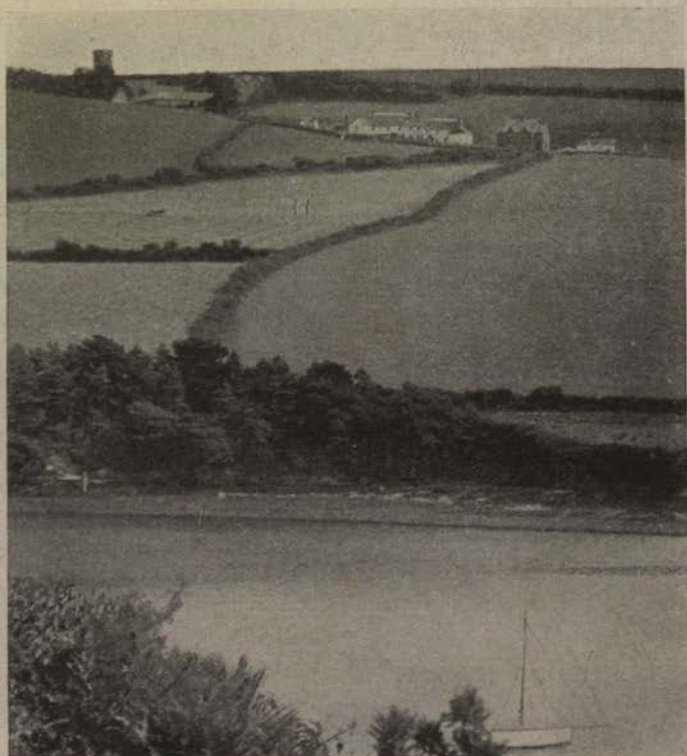
52. AT MOUNT BURES, NORTH ESSEX.



53. A MILL INTERIOR, SHOWING GRINDSTONES IN THEIR HOPPERS.



54. DUNSTER MILL.



55. FIELDS ACROSS THE CREEK, SALCOMBE.

owners. An example of a mill which still stands on the land of the family who have held it for generations is to be found at Dunster, where the picturesque mill with two overshot wheels is almost hidden amidst the trees on the confines of the park.

Windmills do not belong to the same race as water-mills; they recall other memories and make different impressions. The water-mill brings to mind smiling valleys, shady nooks, and swirling waters, and seems an embodiment of the iron hand in a velvet glove, the strong exerting his power so easily and quietly that it does not seem to exist. The windmill, on the other hand, possesses a character like that of the miller of the song, and "cares for nobody". It stands stiff and stark on the top of an exposed ridge, facing all the winds that blow, its whirling sails expressing strong, resistless might and strength. Stand close to a windmill at work and the dull whistling of the sails fills one with fascination and awe. The water-mill seems to belong to summer and sunny skies; the severely simple outline of the windmill to autumn and storm-clouds. On a bright day the windmill may attract little attention, but towards the close of a dull, gloomy day, silhouetted against the dark, gathering storm-clouds, it appears to be twice its size, and in its sombre dress stands for the very embodiment of the spirit of the storm. But its day seems to have passed more surely than that of its brother in the vale, at least in the form which has been familiar to us since childhood, for modern engineers have evolved an iron skeleton-like caricature that pumps water and can be fitted on wheels to move from place to place.

The windmill is not so old as the water-mill, being introduced into this country by the returning Crusaders. For centuries almost the development of the windmill was slow, and even now we occasionally come across a small post-mill which was the original type. These mills are set on a central post on which they revolve, a long wooden arm enabling the miller to turn the mill itself so that the sails are kept to the wind. These are much smaller than the tower-mills, in which the axles of the sails are fitted in a cap

which revolves by means of a small wheel that keeps the sail to the wind, although in the earliest examples the cap had also to be turned by hand gear. The post-mills rarely work more than one or two pairs of stones, but the tower-mills contain as many as six or even eight. Originally the sails consisted of canvas stretched on frames, as their name implies, but in time the wooden shutters were introduced, as they could be opened or shut, according to the force of the breeze, more easily than the sails could be furled. All kinds of mechanisms were invented to regulate the speed of the sails and to prevent them going too fast, and it might almost be said that the windmill was not perfected until it came to be disused.

Not many years ago there were numerous windmills on the outskirts of London, but few of them remain, although some have left their memorial in the name of a road. To those accustomed to it the disappearance of a mill makes an odd gap in the landscape. Who would recognise Quainton and Brill, in Buckinghamshire, if their mills were removed? who could conceive of Friston, in Sussex, without its mill? and how the sunset will lose when the old mill at Coleshill, near Amersham, finally falls to ruin! Even in semi-ruin the windmill lends a dignity to the landscape and seems symbolical of the change and decay that have come over the countryside. Let us make the most of our mills while we may, for they are fast disappearing, only the name of a hill or a road remaining to tell us of their existence. Once upon a time they were common in the north of England, but they seem to be dying out there faster than in other parts of the country, and such a sight as the mill at Patrington in the East Riding is all too rare.

Even in the eastern counties a fine weather-boarded post-mill, such as that at Mount Bures, in north Essex, is not so common as it was, for numbers of mills present the pathetic figure of the ribless skeleton at Madingley, in Cambridgeshire. Yarmouth's last mill was taken down over six years ago, and wherever we go the same tale is told. At one time ten windmills stood on the ridge that overlooks Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire, but not a single one

remains, and in Sussex, where they used to be plentiful, it is the same. Eastbourne has lost the old mill that used to mark the entrance to the town on the Lewes road ; Brighton no longer possesses any mills ; and farther west, in the same county, the tomb of John Oliver, on Highdown Hill, alone remains to tell that once upon a time his mill stood close by.

But if we would write of vanished mills, of poor maimed stumps upon the hills, and decaying wheels in the valleys, the tale would be long. Some of these ruins are monuments to the industry in the past ; witness the huge wheel and the triple gables of the mill at Godmanchester. Creepers hang in festoons over the gaping weatherboarding and climb the roof ; its glazeless windows and the rotting covering of the wheel proclaim all too plainly that its day is over. Now all is peace where the foaming waters roared, and the angler leans over the rails of the little footbridge where in the past the miller must often have stood when his day's work was done. Even as it is to-day it impresses with its size, and reminds the passer-by that once upon a time it ground the corn of a very fertile district.

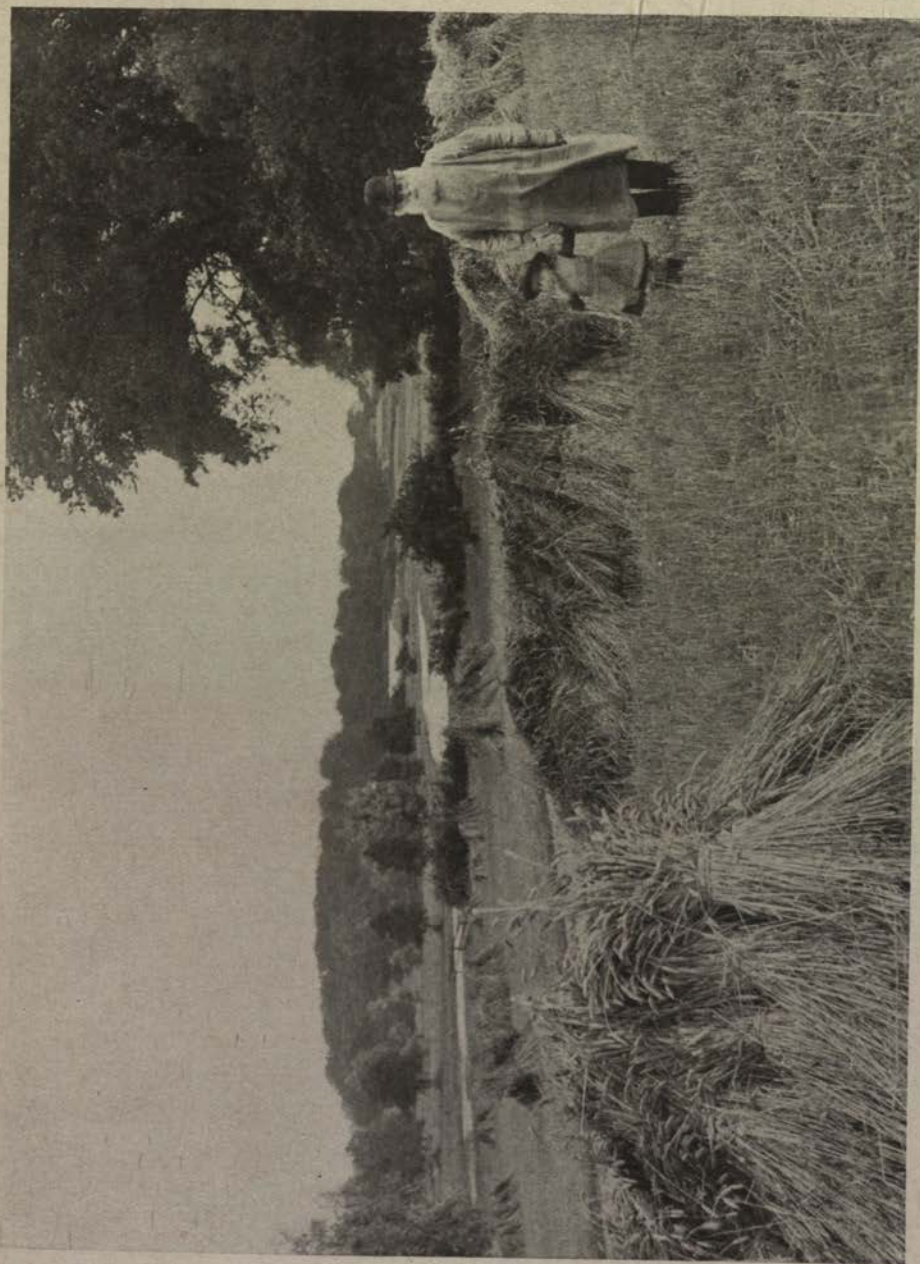
Even those simple water-mills known as clack-mills, which were once common in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the north of Scotland, are now confined to the Shetland Islands. These were very simple mills, owned by several farmers in common. Very primitive and very small, they could be worked by the least of streams, and once set going they required no attention. The corn was placed in a hopper immediately above the stones, a projection on the one which revolved knocking an arm attached to the hopper so that a little of the grain was shaken down at each revolution. The stone was on the same axle as the "wheel", which was set horizontally underneath the floor of the mill. It consisted of a number of fans or paddles, against which the water impinged, and there was a simple contrivance by which it could be thrown out of gear when no grinding was being done.

VIII

FIELDS AND FIELD NAMES

To most people, perhaps, a field is only one of the chequers which form the chess-board of an English landscape, a pleasant place in which to pass a lazy afternoon if one corner is overshadowed by a row of elms ; beautiful enough, no doubt, when the ripening corn billows before the breeze like the waves of the sea, but otherwise merely commonplace because so familiar. To the unobservant one field may be much like another, but to him who knows the secrets of the countryside each has as much individuality and character as the man who tills it. Fields are essentially English ; a hillside cut up into a medley of patterns by well-trimmed hedges speaks of a long-settled, well-cultivated land ; each homestead, with its clustered fields, tells of the slow taming and bringing into subjection of the virgin soil, of generation after generation living and toiling on the land they have won, loving it with a love born of close and lifelong intimacy. Human life succeeds human life, yet the fields which are their background remain, untouched save by the passing of the seasons and by those little changes which serve as landmarks in their history.

Fields differ as much as one part of England differs from another, but they are always characteristic of the district in which they are found. There are the flat lush meadows of the Fens, where dykes often do duty for hedges, not unlike those of Sedge-moor, where pollarded willows overshadow the rines, as the ditches are called ; in parts where the land has been reclaimed and drained the black fertile soil yields heavy crops of corn, and the familiar hedges again make their appearance. In marked contrast to these



56. A BROADLAND CORNFIELD.



57. A CHEQUER OF FIELDS NEAR BARNSTAPLE.



58. A CHILTERN HARVEST.

are the steep pasture fields of hilly countries where horses and cattle seen from a distance resemble flies on a wall. There are the great grass fields of Leicester and the Shires, and the small ones of Middlesex, while the temporary enclosures of hurdles on the downlands hardly warrant the name of fields. The undulating cornfields of Suffolk have nothing in common with the extensive, wind-swept, unenclosed fields on the chalk of Hampshire or Wilts, or the rolling lands of rich red earth in the South Hams of Devon. In Buckinghamshire the corn ripens in fields sheltered by the encircling beechwoods, and in Sussex the cliff of a chalkpit often takes the place of a hedge.

The strict economist tells us that our beautiful hedgerows waste much good land, but it will be a sad day for England if they are ever swept away, for they are one of the most beautiful features of our countryside, with their tangle of undergrowth forming cover for innumerable birds and smaller animals. There are districts so exposed that little would grow were it not for the sheltering hedges which act as wind-screens. The hedges, too, are perhaps even more diversified than the fields, varying from the stone walls of Derbyshire and the north of England—where they are often called “dry stane dykes”—to the brambles or hawthorns of the south. In Cornwall a broad wall of earth and stone bears the name of hedge ; while in slate districts a row of thin slabs keeps the animals from straying, but adds nothing to the beauty of the scene. In Devon are great banks of earth, their sides luxuriant with ferns and topped by the usual hedgerow bushes ; in exposed parts the sheep find shelter under their lee from gales and driving rain.

English agriculture is not a thing of yesterday, but has grown up slowly through centuries as the result of experience and circumstances, modern methods beginning about the time of Queen Anne. Up to about then fields as they are to-day were non-existent, for, generally speaking, the land was unhedged and cultivated on a co-operative plan. When the manor was the unit and the villagers were more or less dependent on their lord, the manor lands were divided into the lord's demesne or private grounds, the common

fields or arable land, the common pasture, and the waste or common. The tenants and villeins, as well as the lord of the manor, had their rights and duties, and complaints were brought before the manor court.

The tenants possessed no piece of ground in one place, as on farms to-day, for strips were scattered in various parts of the common land. As each man had to do his share of ploughing and other work any shirking of duty was prevented, and when the lands were, as often, portioned out by lot all were served the same. The strips were a furlong in length, that is a "furrow long", for that is the distance the plough team could go without a rest; four of these furrows went to the strip, making about an acre. These were usually termed "yardlands" and were divided from each other by strips of unploughed ground known as baulks. Since the land has been enclosed these baulks have disappeared beneath the plough, but on the sides of some hills, notably the Chilterns and Sussex Downs, some of them may still be seen; they are known by the name of "linches" and take the form of narrow terraces or steps, a form produced by the furrow always being driven one way, the team returning to start afresh each time, so that the earth was thrown in one direction until it made a terrace. When the enclosures came these hillside strips were left uncultivated and thus remain to show the ancient method. Some consider these "linches" to be the oldest cultivated ground in England, for it is thought that agriculture was carried on in this way before the coming of the Saxons, while some regard them as natural features.

As it was with the arable fields so it was with the meadows, which may be the oldest and best in the world, for they date at least from Saxon times. Meadow-land has remained joint or common in several places, an example occurring at Bampton, in Oxfordshire, where common meadow is, or was until quite recently, distributed annually by lot. The same system is still in use at Eakring in Nottinghamshire, where the open-field method of cultivation may also be seen.¹ But at one time and another much ploughland has

¹ *Local History and Antiquities* (J. E. Morris and H. Jordan).

been laid down to pasture, although it has been said that it takes ten years to make first-class meadow out of the best arable, and a century out of the worst. After the Black Death the agricultural population was terribly reduced, and, the wool trade rapidly increasing, much ploughland was turned into pasture. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that within the past thirty years thousands of acres of tillage have become meadow, as the ridges and furrows of many fields show.

If we find out the names of fields—for fields always have a name, although this may come as a surprise to the townsman—we shall frequently be reminded of the manorial system and the common-field method of cultivation. Such names as “Crown Acres”, “Common Piece”, “Lord’s Piece”, “Mesne Holms”, and others were bestowed when the feudal system was more than a name. Close to Braunton, in North Devon, is a large unenclosed field divided into strips, which is called the Great Field and may be a relic of the days before enclosures. In Lincolnshire some fields are called “Lunches”, which is probably the same as linches, while here and there, on the lower slopes of downland, portions of pasture are sometimes known as “links”. Other examples of the old-style cultivation are “Hedge Furlong”, “Home Furlong”, “Oxgangs”, and “Gad Meadow”, the last named occurring in Lincolnshire, a “gad” being a strip of grass six and a half feet broad. Owing to the method of cultivating in long strips triangular and irregular shaped pieces of ground would be left untilled in places; these were known as Gores, and the word frequently crops up in the names of fields, while a variation is “No Man’s Land”, here and there called “Jack’s Land”.

“Ox-lease”, “Bull Piece”, and “Cow Meadow” are reminiscent of the day when the lord kept a bull for his tenants, or when the community or parish owned animals in common; they refer, of course, to the place where the latter were kept, or to the meadow that provided the hay. “Lot Meads”, “Dole Meadow”, and “Lammas Lands”, are allusions to the annual distribution by lot which frequently took place on Lammas Day, hence the name. “Stinting” has pretty much the same meaning, a piece of pasture

allotted to one person for his own use for a certain time. Sometimes the word "Bottom" appears in a field name, explanatory when it occurs on low-lying land; it may, however, be met with on high ground. For instance, there is "Bell Bottom", in the north of England; this is said to be a corruption of the Scandinavian "Bottern", or "Botton", meaning an allotment.

"Intake", or "Intack", abounds all over the country, especially near rough common land, showing that the piece in question has been reclaimed. Some fields close to the Humber bear this name, but the river seems to have washed part of them away, while on Dartmoor cultivated enclosures are "New-takes". "Worsalldall Flatt", in Yorkshire, adjoins marshy land, from which it is supposed to have been reclaimed. This may well be the case, as "worsle" is a dialect word meaning wrestle or struggle. "Innings" is another word used in this sense, and a part of Walland Marsh, in Kent, is known as "Becket's Innings" because it was reclaimed between 1162 and 1170 under the direction of the great archbishop.

The names of many fields indicate the use to which they were formerly put. "Goose Acre" and "Pease Howe" bear their own interpretations, but "Fimble Stonges" requires elucidation. Stong is a measure of land, and crops up in several field names in Lincolnshire; Fimble in the above instance means hemp. "Flax-piece" is not uncommon, and in Yorkshire occurs "Hemplats", both of which refer to the time when by law a certain quantity of flax or hemp had to be grown. In Nottingham we find "Candle Rush Car", the place where rushes for rushlights grew, and Lancashire provides "Avorill", a corruption of Haverhill, the hill where haver (oats) were cultivated. Then we come to "Wad (Woad) Close", "Huckaback" (another reference to flax), and "Bell Field" (usually near a church, for it denotes the place where the bells were cast), and "Butts", a very common name, for it refers to the land set apart for archery.

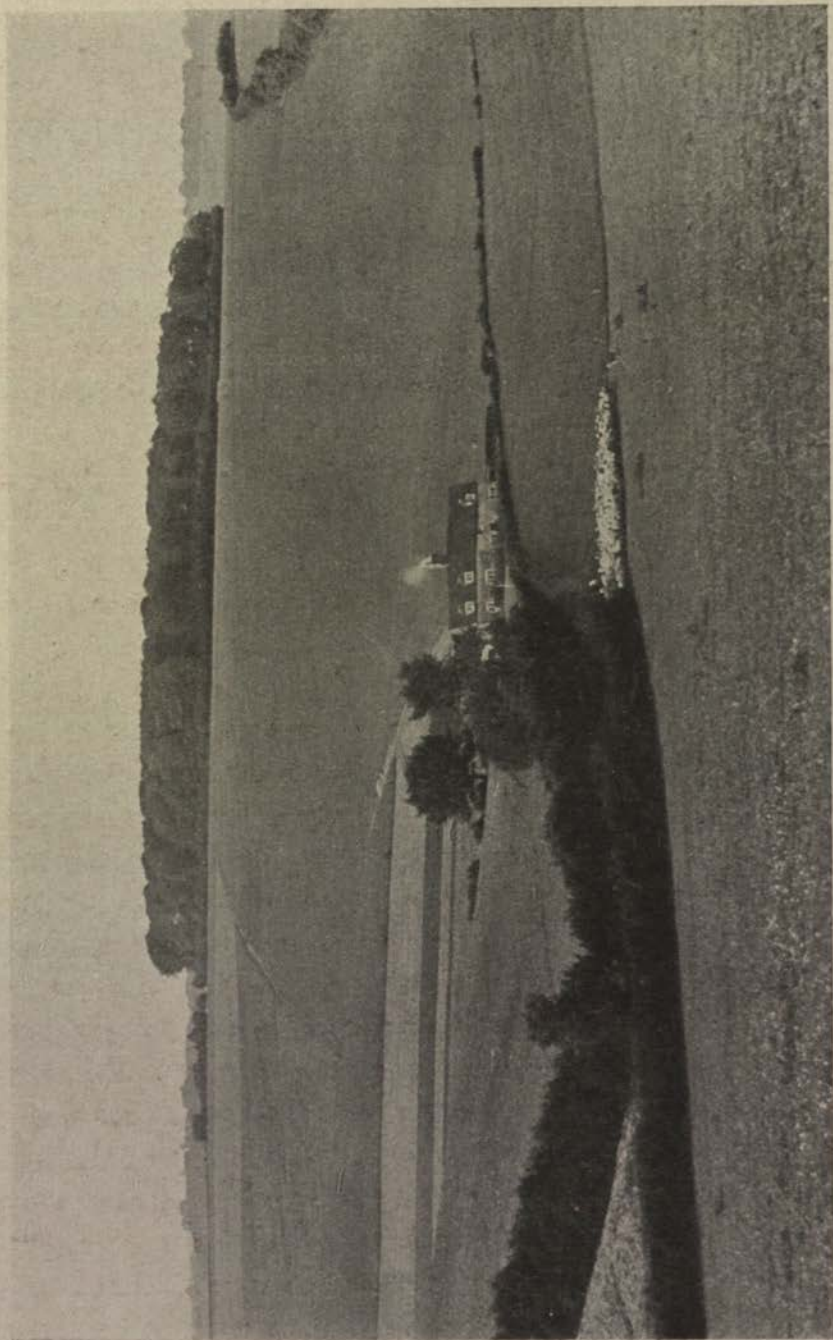
Many field names show that at one time the land was the property of the Church. Such are "Church Field", "Church Meadow", "Church More", "Bell-Ringing Close" (a piece of



59. FIELDS IN THE CHESS VALLEY, SOUTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



60. CHILTERN FIELDS AT BRYANT'S BOTTOM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



61. A CHILTERN SCENE—COLLECTING THE FLOCK.

land left to the Church, its rent to defray the cost of ringing the bells), and "Sentry Field", the last named a corruption of Sanctuary. "Poor Man's Close" and "Poor's Field" are either connected with church doles or are pieces of land which belong to the parish and provide money for the poor. "Close" and "Croft" are enclosures near a dwelling which may have disappeared. "Pigeon-House Croft", for instance, recalls the time when the pigeon-house was a much-valued adjunct to the manor, the birds being an important article of diet when other fresh animal food was scarce. Near Broadway, in the Cotswolds, the fowls roost every night in their hut on "Perry's Grounds"; a rough, scrubby, gorse-grown meadow is known as "Nova Scotia"; and a little strip of ground close by is called "Sally's Furlong". At Bradfield, in Yorkshire, are "The One Day Work", "The Two Day Work", and the "Five Day Work", which probably represent fields that took one or more days to plough.

But though the fields are old enough to tell of the distant past they are also busy with the work of the present—seed-time and harvest, winter and summer, they present the generation of to-day with a panorama of the seasons as they showed it to those long past. In the spring the delicate green of the young wheat is set off by the snow-white blossoms of the blackthorn, and when summer comes the wild flowers carpet the foot of the hedge and the drooping oats seem to tinkle in the breeze. The ring of scythe on whetstone may be heard less frequently in the hayfield than of yore, but the picturesque side of haysel has not quite departed. Even now the reaping hook is sometimes used for the corn, especially when bad weather has laid the ripened grain; but the reaper and binder does its work so thoroughly that even in the few places where the gleaning bell still rings during harvest the custom itself has died out. Autumn brings the smell of newly turned earth, the crimson berries in the hedge, and the clamps in the swede field, while winter sees the sheep folded in the hollow. But anon Nature stirs again, and the fields, hoary with years, spring to fresh life and start anew the age-old round.

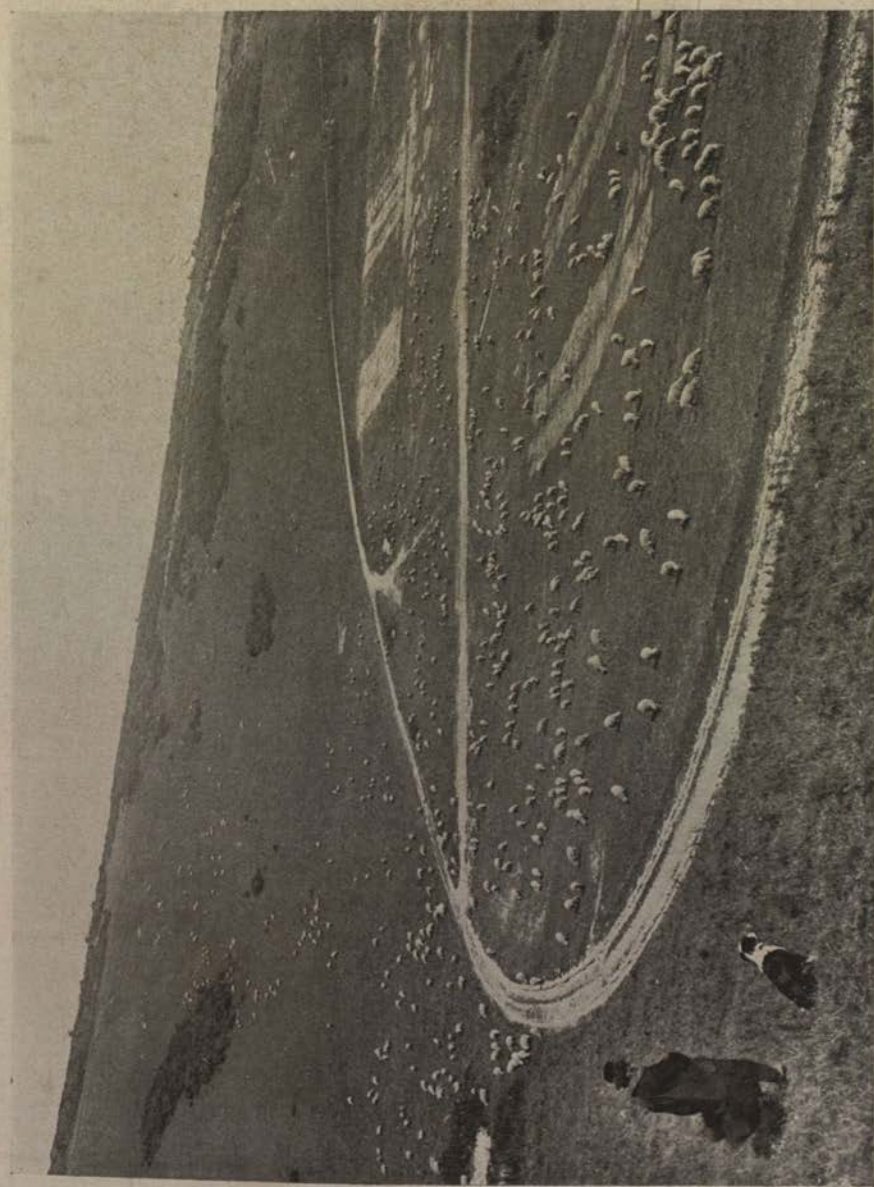
IX

THE SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK

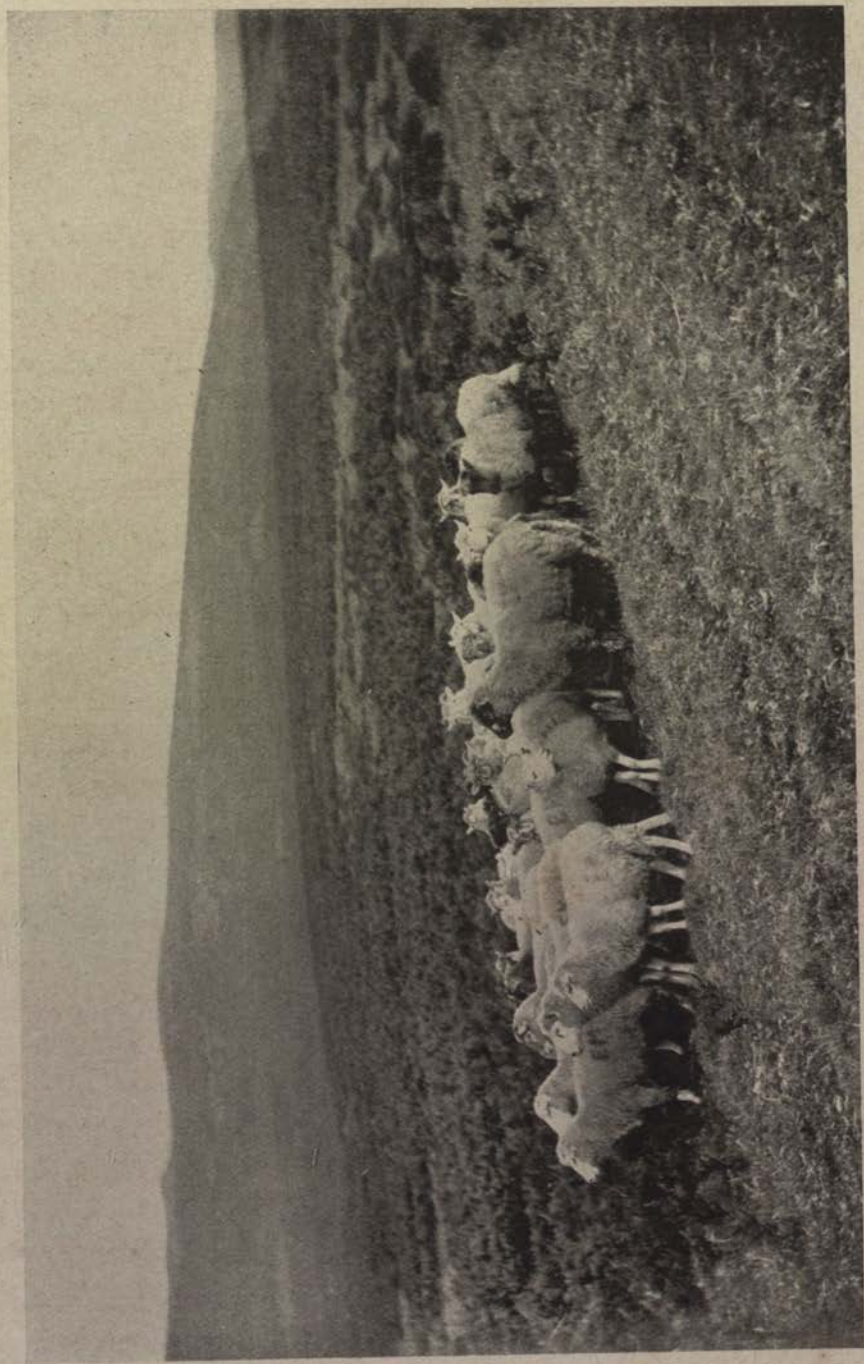
THE tending of sheep is undoubtedly one of the oldest of occupations, for when the world was still young, man reckoned his wealth by the numbers of his flocks and herds. Perhaps it would hardly be too much to say that the first impetus to England's industries was given by the vast flocks of sheep that roamed the downs and pastures. To such an extent was this wealth of the country recognised that when Catherine, daughter of John of Gaunt, married Henry III. of Castile, her dowry consisted of sheep, while during the reign of Edward IV. licence for the exportation of certain Cotswold sheep was given. We are told that these increased to such an extent that Spain profited greatly thereby.

Although the raising of sheep was one of the principal industries of the countryside, it was after the ravages of the Plague that the industry reached its greatest development. The Black Death depopulated the rural districts to such an extent that it was almost impossible to till the land properly, with the natural result that great areas of arable land were turned into sheep-runs. This, of course, was of great benefit to the woollen trade, which made its first stride forward under the encouragement given to it by Edward III., until it became the great staple manufacture of the country. In the days of Henry VIII. this conversion of tillage into pasture was considered a danger, as it encouraged "greedy and covetous people" to withhold land from the occupation of "poor husbandmen", and Parliament passed a law which enacted that no tenant occupier should keep more than 2000 sheep, exclusive of lambs under a year old.

It is difficult to over-estimate the influence this rearing of sheep



62. A SOUTH DOWN SHEPHERD AND HIS CHARGES.



63. ON THE WELSH MOORS.

for their wool had upon England, since it gave the final death-blow to the feudal system and enabled the country to get over the distress caused by the ravages of the Black Death. Although, as we have seen, sheep-farming was carried to an excess, the spread of the woollen industry meant an improvement in conditions generally, while at the same time it was the beginning of the rise of the important merchant class.

Yet of those who gaze at the solitary figure of a shepherd on the downs how few remember this ! In this age of townsmen sheep mean one thing, and one thing alone—mutton ! In the days of old the wool was woven into cloth not far from the place where the sheep were raised upon the hills, but now that machinery has taken the place of men the staple towns doze away their old age in quiet byways, the signs of their inns and their records and charities alone telling of their ancient prosperity.

Even the shepherd himself is changing. He has shed his old blue smock, and the crook will disappear in time. It is not now in universal use as it once was, and no longer is Pyecombe, in Sussex, famous for its crooks. There was something about the crooks fashioned there which is missing in those made elsewhere ; it is said that Pyecombe crooks cost more, and were not so easily made. Often a shepherd would take his iron to the blacksmith and have it fashioned before his eyes according to his own instructions ; and if swords are seldom beaten into ploughshares, old guns were not infrequently turned into crooks. A crook would be a regular heirloom, handed down from father to son, in a family whose members were shepherds by heredity. In the past it was the regular thing for son to follow father in this manner. The son would be brought up within hearing of the bleating of sheep, and as soon as he was old enough he would follow his father to the downs and sit with him all day, learning to drive the sheep himself, picking up the rich store of weather lore that all shepherds possess, and becoming acquainted with the lie of the land, so that he would know where the richest pasture lay, and where, during times of drought, the grass would be dried up last of all.

Shepherds still retain their old characteristics in spite of the change that is slowly taking place. They are still solitary men, slow of speech, and silent before strangers. Sometimes, if you can gain their confidence and pass an hour or two with them on the grassy top of a rolling down, they will tell you something about the wonders of tending sheep. They will tell you how sheep have their regular runs up and down and across the downs which they follow day after day, and how when a sudden snowstorm comes in winter they get muddled and lose their bearings. Then they usually make for the top of the hill and huddle under the hedge until they are buried, though it often happens that they thaw out a hole in the snow by their warmth and breath, and so remain safe. Mountain breeds of sheep are usually wiser than those accustomed to the lowlands or places where snow falls but seldom; instead of turning their tails to the storm they walk against it until they come to a wall or hedge, under the shelter of which they lie safe from the dangers of being overwhelmed in the drift.

The townsman, who visits the country only during the heat of summer, thinks that the shepherd has an easy time of it, driving his flock from pasture to pasture, and spending his days by them in rapt contemplation. But he knows nothing of the anxieties of lambing-time; of the days and almost weeks when the shepherd does not move beyond the fold unless it be to the farm to call for extra help. According to the district the shepherds of Britain are busy practically from November to March or early April tending the patient ewes and the young lambs. When the lambing season approaches, he makes ready a sheltered field, that has been selected long before, often at harvest-time, when a stack is built close to the site so that plenty of straw is at hand. But not every apparently well-sheltered hollow will do for the lambs' nursery; the nature of the subsoil must be considered, so that the wet drains away quickly, for damp is a worse enemy than cold, and the field should be sheltered from north and easterly winds as much as possible. Then, too, a place is chosen near the ground upon which the flock will be feeding, so that the ewes do not have far to walk every evening and

morning. A supply of roots is also provided as near the fold as possible, so that it has not to be carted far when required.

When work is slack during autumn or early winter the hurdles are carted to the place and stacked ready, and the fold is made with many little pens down the sides close under the shelter of the hedge, or if there is nothing to protect them, canvas or sacking is fastened to the hurdles or bundles of furze piled against them, while rough roofs of the same material are also provided, so that there shall be cover from the wet. The hut on wheels of the shepherd is drawn to a place just outside the fold, and here he remains until the lambs are well grown. This hut is a simple little house of one room, with a stove and a kettle of ample size, a bunk, or rough bed, and cupboards and shelves wherein the shepherd keeps medicines, milk for an orphan, and dainties to tempt the appetite of his patients, for often his hut will be a hospital for one or two weakly lambs. There is not much rest for him during lambing-time; he is up and about at all hours of the day or night. Sometimes a weakly patient is carried to the farmhouse and placed before the fire in the kitchen; if a lamb dies he presses its dam into service as a foster-mother, for some orphans will always be found; but it is not easy to persuade a bereaved ewe to undertake the duties, and then the strange lamb may be wrapped in the wool of that which died and be thus presented to the sheep which is required to adopt it.

After the lambing the shepherd's next busiest time is at the washing and shearing. On the downs and low hills the sheep are soon collected and driven into folds near the place of washing, whence they are drafted into smaller pens, and thence to the washers in the pond or stream; but the hill and fell flocks take quite a lot of finding and marshalling, and it is no easy job for the shepherd and his dog to search every enclosure and every dip in the ground lest an animal escape. So, slowly, yard by yard almost, the sheep are driven downwards, the flocks growing larger as they advance until at length all have been collected in the fold. Care must be exercised in getting them to the place of washing, so they are

usually taken, a few at a time, to a smaller pen, for if many of them became excited they might crush one another. If possible, a convenient bay in the bank of the stream is chosen for the annual bath, some stakes or a hurdle or two keeping the animals from escaping until they have been well dipped by means of poles. They are only too glad to escape the unwilling ducking and let themselves be guided to the opposite bank to scramble on to land again.

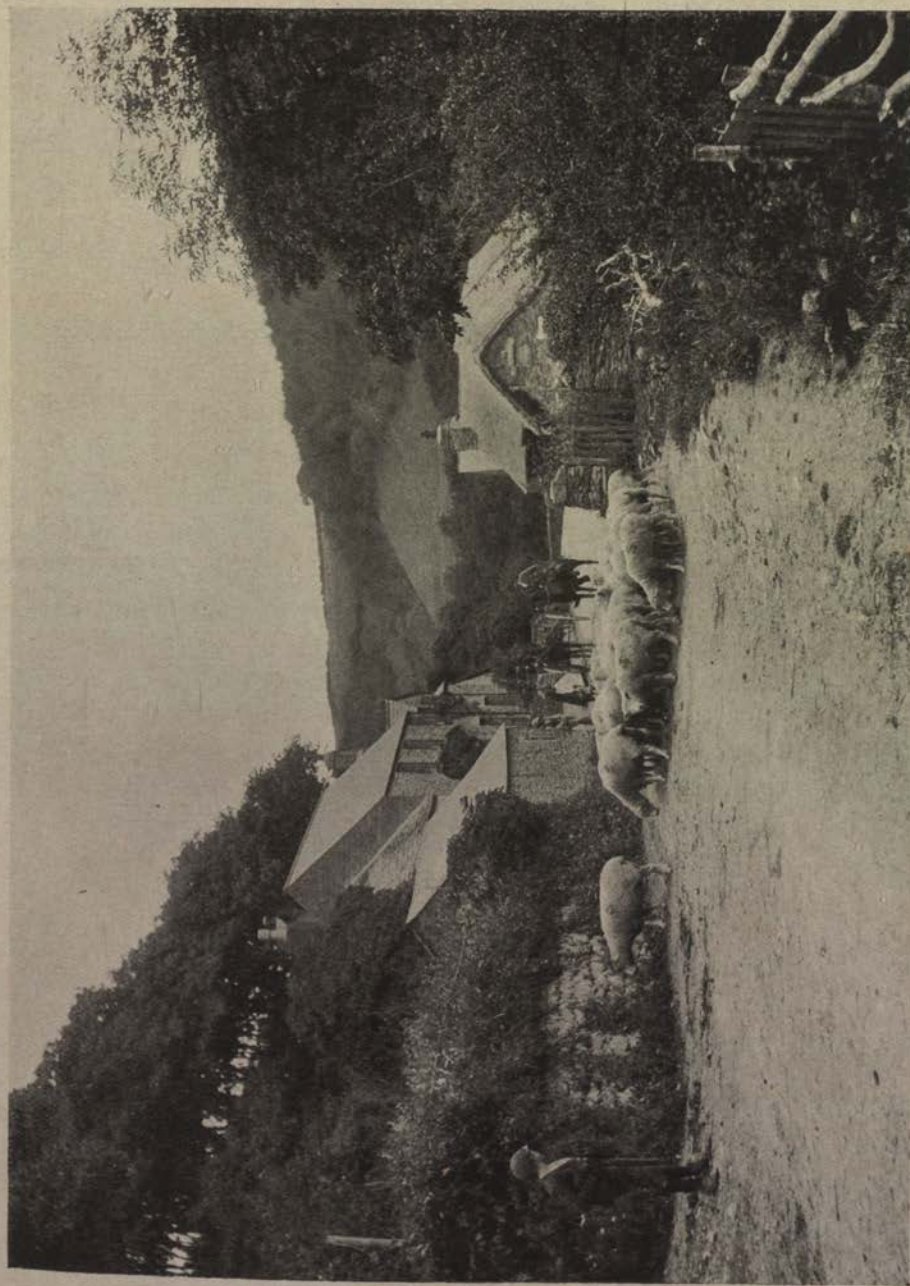
Almost immediately afterwards comes the shearing. The deft fingers of the shearers quickly clip off the fleeces, although now and again a struggling sheep gets slightly cut, when a dab of tar is applied to the wound. What a chorus of baa-ing comes from the fold when the shorn ewes are turned out, and the lambs try to identify their mothers! In the north of England there is an old proverb—

The man that is about to clip his sheep
Must pray for two fair days and one fair week.

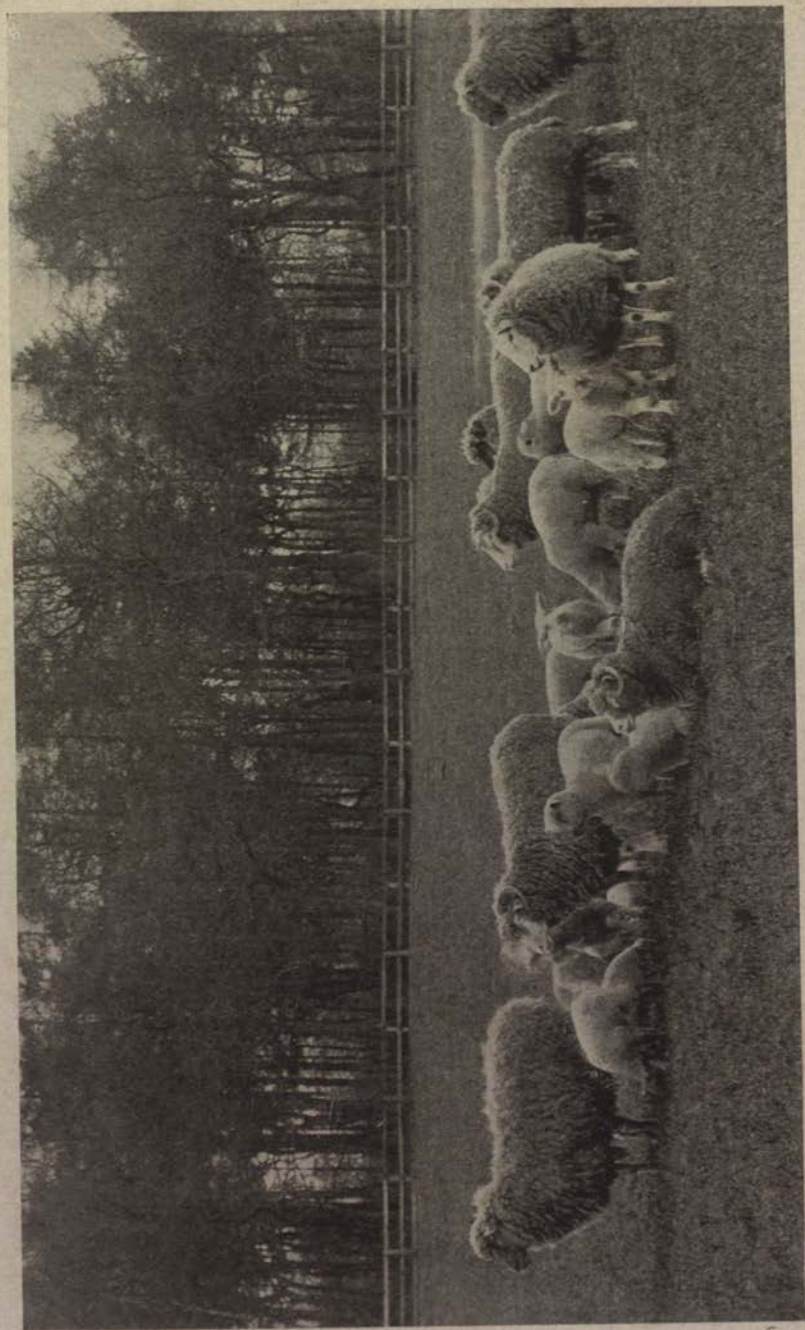
That is, a fine day so that the wool may be quite dry for the shearing, a good day for the actual work, and then sufficient time for the shorn animals to grow accustomed to their loss of wool. The conclusion of the shearing was once a great feast, of nearly as much importance in the countryside as the harvest home, especially in those parts where sheep-raising was the chief industry.

In olden days the shearers elected a king and queen to preside over these feasts, and in the *Poly-Olbion* we learn that the king was he whose flock had produced the first lamb of the season. About a century ago the shearing festival at Holkham was a famous annual fixture that was celebrated in forty-three years, in fact, it much resembled an agricultural show, with ploughing matches and other contests. At one time the shearers had certain perquisites, such as the wamb-locks or loose locks of wool on the belly of the animal, but now the washing and shearing have fallen from the high estate they once held.

He who would write on the lore of the shepherd and his flock would require several volumes, as there is much of interest in the



64. THE FLOCK IN A DEVONSHIRE LANE, NEAR LYNTON.



65. ON AN EAST RIDING FARM.

ancient calling. The shepherd has his distinctive dress, his distinctive implements, and his own traditions, pastimes, and superstitions. There is the crook, the sheep-bell, the tally-stick on which he kept count of the number of his lambs as they came into the world, and the simple sundial of sticks by which he told the time. No longer are there men famous for the sheep-bells they make. Birmingham makes sheep-bells as it makes everything else, but they have not the interest attached to old bells the tinkle of which was often most musical. Cheap watches are ousting simple sundials, but it is doubtful whether they give the time any better than some shepherds could tell it by merely looking at the position of the sun, for years of working on the same hills had taught them to reckon with marvellous accuracy.

There seems little in common between the counting-out games of children and the counting of sheep, but it appears that the sheep-counting score and these rhymes have the same origin. The late Professor Skeat went into the matter and came to the conclusion that the Yan, tan, tethera, pethera, dik (one, two, three, four, ten) and the yan-a-dik, bumpit, yan-a-bumpit (eleven, fifteen, sixteen), etc., are Celtic, in fact, very similar to modern Welsh. He considered that the Britons were shepherds under the Saxons, and when the Normans came the latter had to share the humble lot of their erstwhile serfs and learnt the counting terms from them.¹ The Welsh numerals count to fifteen and then add one-and-fifteen, two-and-fifteen, to twenty, as does the sheep score.

Although science has shown the shepherd that some of his old beliefs are errors, the wisdom of his ancestors and his own experience lead him to know by instinct what moderns learn by experiment; but no longer is he buried with a little piece of wool in his coffin, so that when the Day of Judgment comes he can account for his absence from church on Sunday.

¹ *Shepherds of Britain* (Adelaide L. J. Gosset).

X

THE FOOTPATH WAY

ROADS? What are they but the creation of yesterday! Every wayfarer worthy the name takes the footpath, and as things are tending nowadays those of us who have not yet lost the use of our legs are reverting to the habits of our remotest ancestors and returning to the beaten track across country, the ancient path trodden hard by many feet. Our highways are slowly but surely becoming a track for motors, heavy traction-engines, and the popping motor-cycle, so that the wise pedestrian avoids them as much as possible. And so the footpaths are coming into their own again, and even the townsfolk are beginning to appreciate them and to understand that a mile along a fieldpath, although stony or muddy, is worth three along the dusty road.

Thus we are witnessing the genesis of our roads, for most of our highways began life as a mere path or track connecting one place with another. This is the reason they are frequently not the direct way between two important towns, as these are of comparatively modern growth, the roads serving originally the older hamlets around. To the labourer going to work the footpaths are often of more value than the main roads, for they lead direct from his home to the place where he is employed, or they are the shortest cuts between a village and a town. Originally, perhaps, they formed the route followed by the inhabitants of some farm; then their friends took the same way, and they in turn introduced it to others, until at length everyone in the district used the path, and thus it became a broad track across the fields and a right of way came into being.



66. A TYPICAL DEVONSHIRE STILE.



67. A BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIELD STILE ON THE WAY TO COLESHILL.



68. THE LOVERS GROVE, BRIDPORT, DORSET.

No footpath can ever be dull ; it may perhaps be a weariness to the flesh, especially on a blazing day when it crosses diagonally a large field on a slope. In these circumstances no sailor in a storm enters port with more contentment than the wayfarer reaches the stile in the sheltered corner. How pleasant it is to sit awhile on the broad polished top rail and contemplate the steep path up which we have come. If the way be new to us we look ahead to see what lies before us, and how we rejoice if it continues beneath the branches that overhang the headlands of the field ! Except through a country of flat meadow-land no two paths are alike, and even then every field has a character of its own.

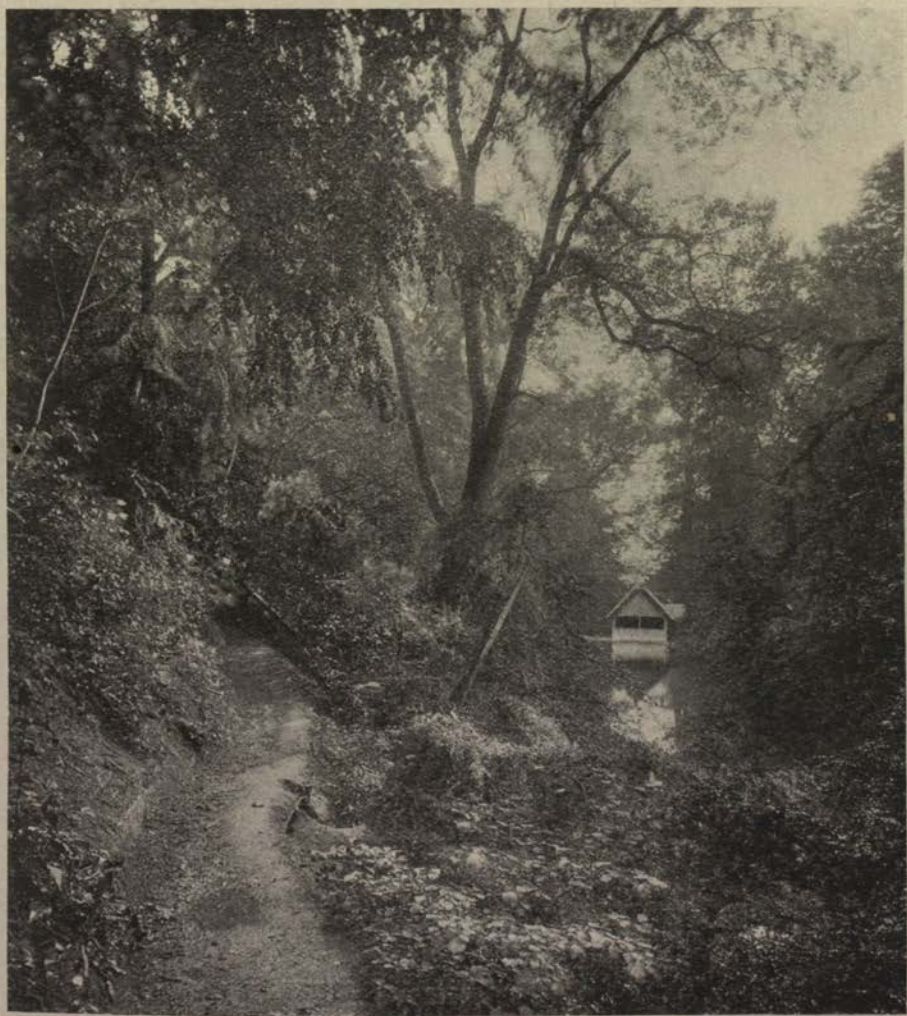
There are paths which are paths only by courtesy, so little used that they are practically non-existent ; sometimes we can follow them only by looking ahead and noting the narrow ribbon, slightly different in colour from the grass on either side, that is visible only from a short distance. The stranger, anxious to get from one village to another, frequently takes such paths to save time ; but when he has at last puzzled out the way by noting the lie of farms or woods he finds that he has lost more time than he has saved, although he has obtained much pleasure. To enjoy the footpath way one must surrender oneself to its allurements entirely and give no thought to time.

There are other fieldpaths used so seldom that the stile has not been replaced since it fell to pieces many years ago, and the gate over which we clamber is almost overgrown with nettles and cow-parsley, so that it is hard to believe there is a right of way. Deceptive paths start so well that they invite the passer-by to leave the dusty road, and then, having lured him a field or two, stop abruptly and are only to be followed by noting the stiles. At the very least the footpath teaches observation ; pay no heed where we are going if the way be unknown, and before we know it we are lost in a maze of sheep tracks and find ourselves walking into the muddy watering pond in the corner.

Roads give us acquaintance with the country, footpaths give

us its friendship. The highway is always more or less constructed to the same model, so that, like the town, it gives us the broad aspect of a district, but not its intimate details. The footpath lets us into its secrets ; it allows us to see the work in the fields, and shows us what is cultivated ; it reveals the original soil, and gives peeps into the bartons of the farms or the yards of the cottages so that we may see whether the picturesque front merely hides tumble-down behind ; it teaches us whether the district is well or ill cultivated ; the very path itself lays bare for all to see the most common destination of the villagers, whether the way to the church or to the inn is most frequently trodden. The stiles also give us some insight into the character of the landowner, showing whether he looks after his estate well, keeping the fences, gates, and stiles in good repair, or whether he is a shiftless or poverty-stricken man who lets everything fall to rack and ruin, allowing gates to go unpainted for years together, fences to be patched by odd branches, and leaving rotten worn-out stiles uncared for until they fall from very decay.

Stiles, too, are a necessary adjunct to the footpath, and have a character of their own. They tell us something about the place on which they are found. Wealthy urban district councils prefer the swing-gate, beloved of the portly and middle-aged, the inscriptions scribbled on the white paint giving some idea of the youth of the neighbourhood, too often, alas ! showing neither much sense of humour nor high character. Landowners also use the swing-gate largely, and it would appear as if the old-fashioned stile would soon be a thing of the past. Where little money is spent a stile is seldom more than a light wooden fence untouched by tool, difficult to negotiate and soon broken, whereas in countries where stone is found in abundance roughly hewn blocks of this material are used, while here and there, as in parts of Devon, Cornwall, and Wales, those abominations, slabs of slate, are used ; when crossing them one always fears to slip and cut oneself in two, so that one-half will fall on either side. In the west of England, where the roads are sunk, or one field is on a higher



69 BY THE SILENT POOL, ALBURY, SURREY.



70. A FOOTPATH NEAR YEOVIL.

level than the next, regular flights of steps lead up to the stile proper. But then stiles vary so in character that they require as long a dissertation as the fieldpath itself.

Perhaps the greatest charm of the footpath is its unexpectedness ; it is never the same for two fields running. Here it cuts diagonally across, there it hugs the hedge ; now it goes straight up over a hill and down the other side as steeply, now it follows the bank of a stream ; on occasion it will strike right through the heart of a thick wood ; and anon it keeps so near the outskirts that the few trees that enclose it must have grown up since it was first trodden out. Often it traverses such swampy ground that it becomes impassable in winter, and unless we are stoutly shod we never know when further progress will be barred by such soft places. In Kent and Sussex the footpath is at times hidden between double hedges or by folds in the ground, as it was not always used for such an innocent purpose as now, indeed it is really one of the hidden smugglers' ways used in the days when "Free Trade" had a decidedly different meaning. In places a footpath forms part of one of those ancient trackways that are to be found in many parts of England, or maybe it was a pilgrim's way, or even a pack-horse track. Here and there, perhaps, we come across a paved way, maybe a narrow track leading from a monastery to a church, and by such a cross or its remains may sometimes be found. Very rarely, too, the path, between an avenue of stones, leads up to a menhir erected in days before the dawn of history. There are also ancient ways by which the wayfarer climbs a down to a stronghold or "castle", to which our remote forefathers retired when enemies were in the neighbourhood.

It can never be said that a footpath is not worth traversing until we have followed it from end to end. Its beginning may be commonplace and its end worth nothing, but in the middle we know not what charm there may be. Thus we can never tell a footpath by its beginning or its end ; in this it resembles an adventure. A man starts on it without thought, and its end is an

anti-climax, while those who witness the beginning or the end know nothing of the great happenings between. In hilly country there are scores of such paths. For instance, in the summer hundreds of people drive from Liskeard to the Cheesewring, but perhaps not a score know the footpath that leads from Minion's Mount almost to Tremar ; it begins in a hollow along the track of the old mineral line, the round stone sleepers at one side forming the path, and ends at a "hedge" or wall at a railway siding. Its beginning is hard to find, and its end does not exist ; the wayfarer seems to arrive in a cul-de-sac by some cottages, but he climbs the "hedge", walks along its top for a yard or two, and descends into the road, regretting he has come to the end of as alluring a path as could be found, although most of the way has been past disused mine workings.

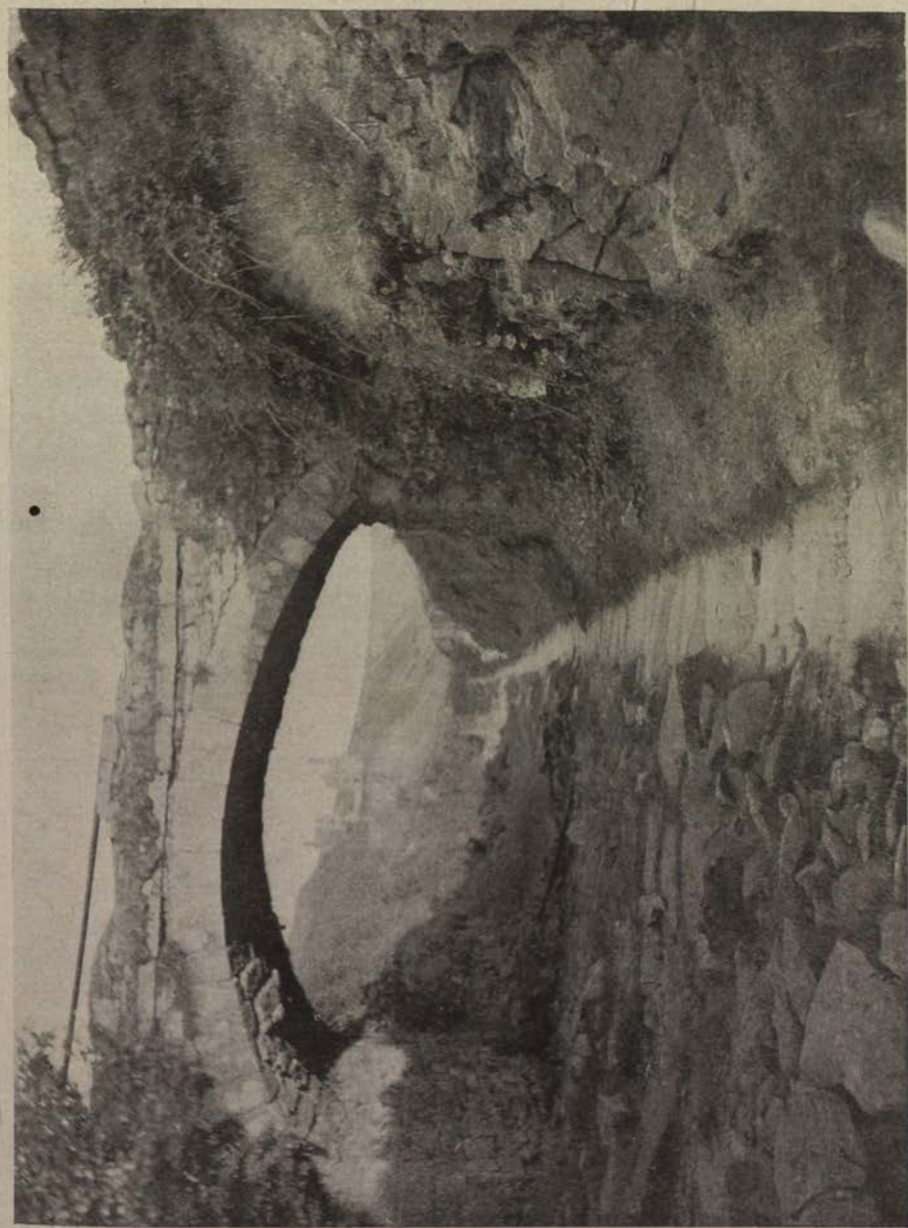
No footpath is ever unattractive ; at the very worst there are the birds, the wild flowers, and the beasts, be they merely mild-eyed cattle or rabbits. There are pleasant banks on which we can lie and watch the reaping or the ploughing, and when dusk falls if we are very still a stoat will often venture forth noiselessly, while a mole or a hedgehog will more frequently be seen. How better may we spend a drowsy afternoon than in a shady corner beside the footpath at the edge of a down ? We look on the landscape spread below, the men at work in the fields, the cattle standing knee-deep in the ponds, and the carters driving slowly along the white ribbon of a road, hidden in a cloud of dust when a tootling motor-car rushes by. The air is heavy with the scent of flowers, and the droning hum of the insects soothes us to sleep as we watch the birds weave intricate patterns in the air, for only now and again are we disturbed by someone passing. Then beside the path through the wood are tree-trunks whereon to rest awhile, listening to the noises of the wind in the trees, the call of a pheasant, or the sudden laugh of a woodpecker. Perhaps a squirrel will come and share the trunk with us, but it will not stop for long and is soon off and up another tree.

There are stony tracks across the mountains, giddy paths that sometimes skirt precipices and at all times afford glorious views ; breezy ways across open moorlands where the air of heaven blows pure and invigorating ; and devious routes across bogs which are dangerous for the stranger to traverse ; but most wonderful of all is that trail blazed round the shores of England, the Path of White Stones—the Coastguard's path. Up to recent times those familiar splashes of white were to be found all round our coast, but now that the numbers of the Coastguard have been reduced many miles remain unpatrolled, the rains have washed away the markings, the path itself is disappearing beneath the tangled undergrowth that fringes the cliff's edge, and the familiar cottages are used for other purposes.

Fortunately, it has not wholly gone ; sufficient of it remains to show its characteristics—characteristics, let us hope, that are peculiarly English. First of all, it is never out of sight of the sea, although on occasion it may thread the jungle of an overgrown, boulder-strewn undercliff where tall furze and bramble almost blot out the light of day ; within such shelter a natural hut beside a rock sometimes forms the meeting-place of two adjoining patrols, so that he who gets there first can await the coming of his comrade. Then it is open to all the changes of weather, the fierce wind, the driving rain, and the dense sea-fog. Above all, nothing daunts it ; it goes straight ahead, now high above the waves over the grassy slopes of a tall cliff, now round a swamp where a streamlet loses itself in the sands.

Difficult to traverse it may be, for in places crazy stiles that overhang the edge must be crossed, but it has one great advantage, it is difficult to lose the way. First of all, those familiar splashes of whitewash shine out even on a dark night ; and secondly, if we but follow it we are bound to come to a look-out sooner or later. Even if the occupant is away the line of telephone wire can be followed across the fields until it brings us out on a road by which civilisation can soon be reached. However, the confirmed footpath

walker who is never so happy as when traversing the Coastguard path prefers to keep on his way until a road comes to him, as it will if only he keeps on long enough. And here and there natural couches which call aloud for use are to be found, and then time passes so quickly that unless we are slaves to our watches we shall linger far longer than we should, and must hurry homewards lest fond relatives fear we have come to an untimely end.



71. A FOOTPATH ALONG A DISUSED CORNISH MINERAL RAILWAY.



72. A BYROAD AT "THE HALVES," FRESHWATER, ISLE OF WIGHT.

XI

BY-ROADS AND TRACKWAYS

THERE be some vandals who regard a road merely as a highway between two places ; their demand is that it must be as smooth and straight as possible in order that no time may be wasted in traversing it. Their souls lie in their speedometers or distance-recording instruments, and their only desire is to lunch in one place and sup in another at some inconceivable distance. Week by week they raise lamentations in the motor journals because callous local authorities will not straighten crooked ways, cut new roads to avoid hills, or place a sign at every lane so that they can go as they list. The farmer and the carter, too, are indifferent to the way except as a means of communication, preferring the lane merely because it is less frequented by the motorist.

It will be an evil day for England when the corners are straightened out, the lanes widened, and the hedges cut back for motor traffic. No doubt in time much of this will come about, but fortunately it is not yet. There are thousands of miles of quiet country lanes and side-roads where the only traffic is the farmer's trap, the labourer's bicycle, and the haycart. Even these are few and far between, usually met with at certain hours of the day, although one never knows when a team with a plough or a drill may not turn out of a field to proceed to another. The narrow lanes of England are unique, for nothing quite like them exists abroad, and they possess a charm which is second only to that of the footpath.

Many of these by-roads are almost as old as time, being the prehistoric tracks that crossed the country before our island had a name. In those days there were no engineers to blast away a

mountain-side to make an easy grade, and so these tracks climb the steepest hills. But no haphazard route was chosen; these ancient ways wind down a hillside in the shelter of a wood to a point of the stream where a ford may be found. When they come out in the open the folds of the ground are followed so that the track is more or less hidden, for enemies often lay in wait. Frequently they lead right along a ridge from which observations could be kept on the surrounding country to avoid a sudden surprise. The wayfarer can find many of these ancient trackways in hilly country and on high open downland; they may be followed for many miles in Hampshire and Berkshire and Wiltshire and other counties, yielding views of incomparable extent and diversity. Along their sides are tumuli, camps, and the ancient villages of that long-forgotten race which raised the menhirs and the stone rows. Here it is that finds of flint implements, old ornaments, crude pottery and coins, are often made. Sometimes a Roman road follows a portion of these trackways, which existed long before the invaders came, and sometimes the line of the old route is only faintly indicated by a different aspect of the grass.

Even if all the roads were levelled and straightened and tarred for the motorist, the pilgrim of pleasure could find hundreds of these almost deserted trackways to explore. They are hidden between the fields on the slopes of hills, faintly traceable across seldom-traversed heaths, and suddenly appear from nowhere to disappear as completely within a mile or so. Some are deep and narrow and so overgrown by spreading hedges that even the "oldest inhabitant" cannot tell their names or uses; others are still used occasionally, and their ancient names reveal their original purpose. Many of our turnpikes follow the old Roman roads, but miles and miles of the latter have gone out of use because the places they link together are no longer of importance. In the north-east of England there are long stretches, overgrown and deserted, of the Watling Street that led into Scotland, while in other parts of the country woods have encroached on the old road. Again, half-way down the slopes of our hills we come across a mile or



73. A GREEN LANE, HARTWOOD, DEVIZES.



74. A BYROAD BY THE KITLEY RIVER, SOUTH DEVON.



75. A WELSH BYROAD AT GUMFREYSTONE.



76. CASTLE EDEN DENE, DURHAM.

two of wide grass-grown rutty lane enclosed between hedges, which mark the route of the Icknield Way or other ancient track.

There are scores of by-ways for the interested wayfarer if he will puzzle out the route for himself, for even good maps are not always helpful. There are the old mediæval ways, for instance, of which the best known is the oft-described Pilgrims' Way along the North Downs to Canterbury. But this is by no means the only pilgrim road in England. After Nazareth fell into the hands of the Turks it was popularly reported that the Virgin had taken up her abode in the shrine at Walsingham, and perhaps as many pilgrims went along the Palmers' Way to the little Norfolk town as to Canterbury; the great Harry himself walked part of the way barefoot a year or two before he suppressed such places. A shorter one is that between Winchcombe and Hayles in Gloucestershire, still largely used because it is the shortest road between those places. Those who explore the by-roads in the neighbourhood of once famous shrines will occasionally be able to trace, by means of wayside chapels and crosses, the route followed by our forefathers. For instance, there is Chapel Farm, on Lansdown Hill, Bath, and the "Slipper" Chapel, Walsingham; but a cross does not necessarily imply a pilgrim's road, for they are often found beside a Monk's Path which leads from an abbey to a church, such as that pleasant lane, partly paved, from Cleeve Abbey to Old Cleeve church in Somerset.

The name of a little-used lane often enables us to gain an insight into some ancient local industry. There are Salt Ways, Rush Ways, Tin Ways, and what not, while the Keg Ways of Kent and Hollow Ways of Sussex revive memories of the time when smuggling was regarded as quite a virtuous occupation! Across Dartmoor from Buckfastleigh to Buckland, with a branch to Tavistock, is the Abbots' Way, sometimes called the Jobbers' Path, which Mr. Crossing thinks was so named because it was formerly used by yarn jobbers. Most important of these generally little-used roads were the Drove Ways and Pack-horse tracks. Perhaps the most famous of the

former are the old Drove Road of East Anglia, and Banbury Lane, or the Welsh Road of Northampton and Oxford, a broad green track which was used from the Middle Ages almost up to modern times. Broad and grassy, it afforded plenty of pasture for the cattle, and, what was nearly as important, avoided the toll-gates. In Buckinghamshire are narrow grass-grown lanes still known as Welsh Ways, a memorial to the days when Welsh cattle were driven to London. Middlesex has many of these green lanes, largely given up to the gipsies, while the longest in the country is the Peddars' Way of Norfolk, which keeps to the ridge most of the way, passing only one village in this course, according to Mr. Dutt. But some of these drovers' roads are still in use, especially on the borders of Hampshire and Wiltshire, where flocks of sheep traverse them. Many of these lanes form parish boundaries, a sure sign of age.

Others of these narrow by-roads, especially in Devonshire and Yorkshire, are pack-horse tracks once for centuries in use. The borders of Exmoor are honeycombed with these deep lanes, now often only clefts almost hidden in vegetation, but once thronged with the long trains of pack-horses. There are nearly as many in Yorkshire, their routes marked by the pack-horse bridges which spanned the streams. "So lately as the middle of the eighteenth century there was no better road in or out of Bradford than a pack-horse road—a narrow passage, often paved, not broad enough for a cartway." In Kent are the Hog Ways along which swine from the Weald were driven, while the lich or corpse ways are more rare. Although still common in Cumberland they are falling out of use; one example in the south of England is that, now partly obliterated, to Lydford, on Dartmoor. In olden days it was the common belief that the carriage of a dead body across private land originated a right of way, and recent statements in Coroners' and other courts prove that this has not yet died out. Not all our lanes are as old as these, however. For part of their length, perhaps, they follow the old track, or several old ways may be joined together by more modern farm roads. When turn-

piques were introduced, the farmers and carriers who still used the pack-horse objected most strongly to the tolls, and several of the former in the same neighbourhood would combine to avoid the high road as much as possible.

When a ridge of hills rises more or less abruptly from a plain, steep lanes often lead to the villages hidden on the flanks, the main roads taking a more circumspect and level course. Perhaps the summit consists largely of rough common, and here the beginnings or endings of the lanes are hidden. The start is unrecognisable, perhaps a few cart ruts, but below the common they begin to resemble roads as commonly understood. Rapid is the descent, stayed for a time perhaps where the way winds round the shoulder of a hill overlooking the country laid out like a map below. Then the lane plunges downward through a wood, so recklessly that the wayfarer must perforce run. And he must find his way by instinct, for fellow-travellers there are none to direct him when he comes to a maze of ways. But so long as he keeps descending he cannot go entirely wrong, although after a false turn he may find himself crossing the lawn of some mansion.

Perhaps these lanes are the most glorious of all. After toiling to the summit, one loiters above the world for a time, drinking in the pure air and enjoying the view, and then comes a short, breathless, heart-singing rush ; down, down, picking one's way across an uneven waste ; through the gorse of the more level common ; down, slipping, sliding, plunging through a wood ; now gazing straight down into a combe, and then almost immediately coming out at its mouth far below ; until at length the way becomes less stony and more civilised just before it enters a village at the foot of the ridge.

Many lanes serve an isolated farm or two, and at intervals gates to prevent cattle straying bar the way. Mayhap the road itself forms a sort of annexe to a farmyard, but after passing a thicket, in the shelter of which the house is built, a gate gives access to the open moor, where the road ends abruptly, its place being taken by a grass-grown track perceptible only by its wheel ruts and hoof marks. Gates are a feature of the by-roads in Wales—stony

tracks that lead across the lower shoulders of the mountains, not to be recommended to the city pedestrian who wants a smooth paved way.

What can be better than those rough by-roads that run close to the Cornish coast? They twist and turn and dip and climb, now broad, well-metalled roads, now lanes so narrow that "bays" have to be cut in the banks for vehicles to pass; if two carters meet, one must back his horse till the nearest "bay" is reached. Here they run beneath high banks carpeted with ferns and wild flowers; there they cross a strip of down, open to all the winds of heaven; while anon they fall suddenly to the shores of a sandy beach, a low wall keeping out the sea except at unusually high tides, when they are impassable. At places they skirt the cliffs of a little bay eaten out of the coast, and one can gaze down into the blue waters and watch the gulls paddling on the shore. At a sharp turn they will drop almost perpendicularly to a fishing village huddled in a combe; elsewhere, after a long gentle descent, an arm of an estuary is reached, fordable for vehicles, though the pedestrian must go round the head of the creek a mile away.

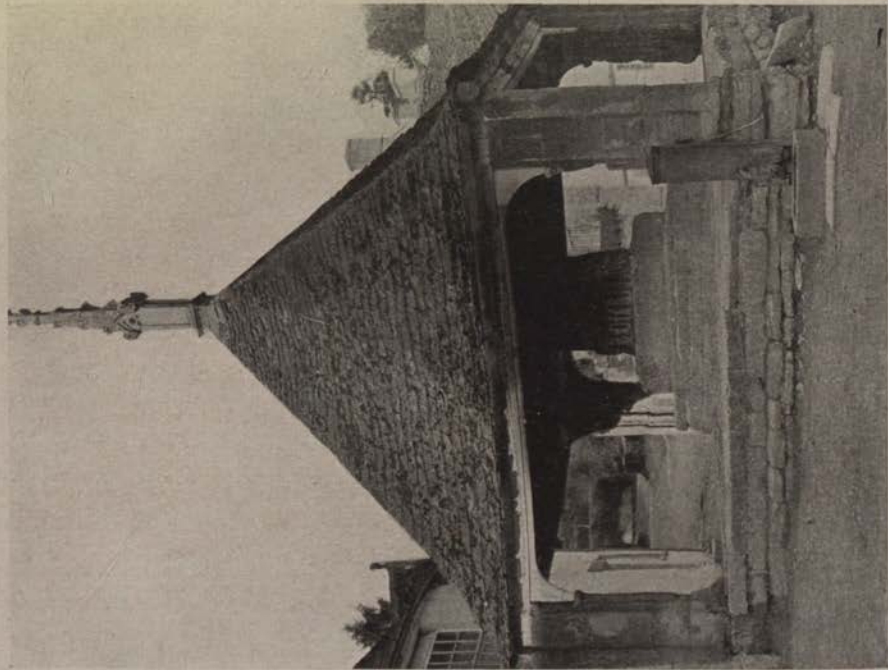
But every by-road is beautiful, be it one of those chalky ways that cut aslant the downs of Sussex, one of the rough roads of Derbyshire or the Lake District, the windswept track across a Yorkshire moor, or even one of those commonplace but beautiful lanes that thread rural England in every direction. By the wayside Nature plants a garden more beautiful than any designed by man, and from early spring until late autumn its blossoms tell the season of the year. The abundance of wild life is another charm of the by-way. Rabbits sit in the sun on the patches of grass, thrushes bring their dinners to a convenient stone, a stoat or a weasel will run out of the hedge across the lane, or a hare go loping away as one turns a corner. In the spring the snout of a hedgehog may be seen pushing aside the leaves beneath the hedge as he takes his first sniff of the air after his long winter sleep. Not long afterwards comes the building time, when the birds may be watched at work carrying material to their nesting-place, and then a week or two later there is the joy of finding the first egg.



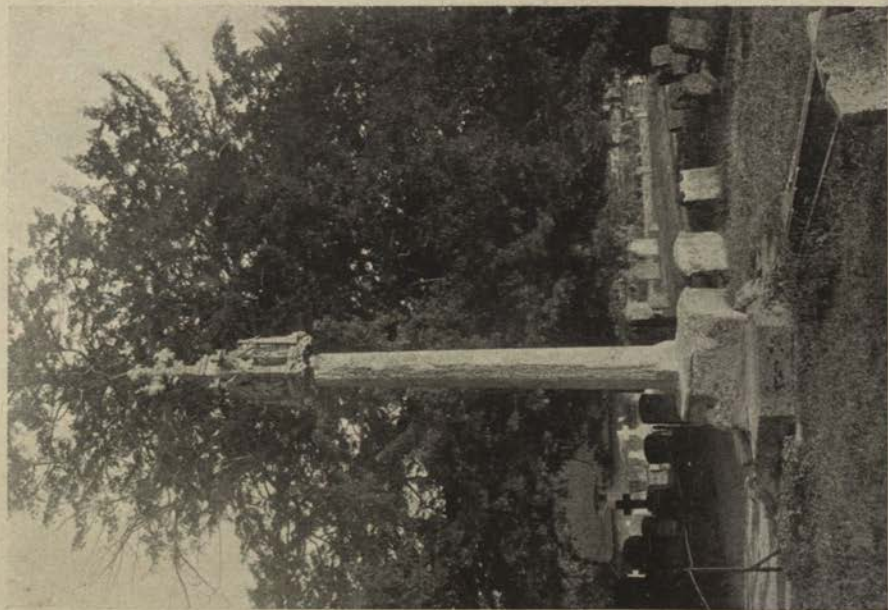
77. A BYWAY IN THE QUANTOCKS, AT TRISCOMBE.



78. THE ROAD TO BIGBURY VILLAGE.



79. THE MARKET CROSS, CASTLE COMBE.



80. THE CHURCHYARD CROSS, DORCHESTER, OXON.

XII

WAYSIDE AND MARKET CROSSES

ONLY within comparatively recent years have most of us recognised the wealth of antiquarian treasure to be found all over the country, and even now vandals cheerfully destroy priceless monuments without a qualm. From time immemorial farmers and stone masons have pulled down prehistoric circles to make gate-posts or build walls, while those who should have known better have destroyed churches or other old buildings to erect lordly dwelling-houses for themselves. Others, again, have been imbued with the lust of wanton destruction, such as that heathen tourist mentioned by the Welsh Monuments Commission who shattered a cromlech with dynamite.

Many old works of art have been defaced from a mistaken sense of godliness by puritanical people who regarded anything beautiful as smacking of the devil. At the Reformation and during Puritan times a large number of old stone crosses were either defaced or pulled down. Even those which survived were left to the mercy of people who were blind to their interest, and many have been removed, to make way for hideous memorials commemorating some unimportant local event, or even to decorate a private house.

At one time the country was thickly dotted with crosses, and the number which has survived the assaults of time and vandalism is very much larger than many imagine. Some parts are richer in them than others, and most occur in the north of England within the old kingdom of Northumbria, Derbyshire, the Isle of Man, Somerset, and Cornwall, where there are upwards of three hundred. To the student of history they all throw some light on

the tale of the past. Some bear the names of long-departed kings and commemorate a battle which decided the fate of a district or even half the country ; others are fashioned in a style that tells of the incursion of an invader ; many call to mind the introduction of Christianity into England ; and not a few mark the halting-places of beloved corpses borne reverently to their last rest.

The majority probably mark old preaching-places, especially the most ancient of all, for when Christianity was introduced crosses were set up by the missionaries at meeting-places where the Angles and Saxons were wont to worship their heathen gods. Thus some of the oldest crosses are older than the churches by which they stand, for, set up at the first preaching-places of the missionaries, converts would gather round them as they now assemble in church, in fact, crosses might be called the original churches. Paulinus converted the Northumbrian King Edwin and went through his kingdom preaching, although his success does not appear to have been great. The crosses at Whalley, Lancashire, are thought to have been erected by him. St. Wilfrid, the first Archbishop of York, succeeded where Paulinus met with comparative failure, and his journeyings through old Northumbria are marked by many crosses. It is said that he was attended by a body of working monks who carved and set up crosses where he preached. The beautiful Saxon cross at Eyam, Derbyshire, was perhaps a preaching cross, and according to Dr. Cox the mutilated cross at Taddington was probably erected by Celtic missionaries from Lindisfarne about the middle of the seventh century. Stapleford Cross, in Nottinghamshire, about the removal of which there was controversy some years ago, may be nearly as old.

The Isle of Man is also rich in crosses, and contains several which may date from the sixth and seventh centuries, as well as others, more recent, which show signs of Scandinavian influence, as do some of those in Derbyshire and others in various places. Some of the Cornish crosses are as old ; there is a very fine one at St. Neots of granite, carved with interlaced work ; the story goes that it is mounted on the stone on which St. Neot stood to unlock



81. CHILDS' WICKHAM CROSS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.



82. THE VILLAGE CROSS, CROWCOMBE, SOMERSET.



83. AN EARLY CORNISH CROSS AT NOMAN'S LAND, LOSTWITHIEL.
A STUDY IN CONTRASTS : GOTHIC GRACE AND CELTIC COARSENESS.

the church door, which gives a homely touch to the many stories told about him.

At Durham is an example from Hexham known as Acca's Cross, because it came from the grave of that bishop, who died in 738. At Bewcastle is a fine cross about twenty feet high which is of even earlier date; on it is a figure of Christ, His right hand held up in blessing and His left holding a book, over which is the inscription, "Gessus Kristus". On it is also a figure of St. John; the ornament is of interlaced work, and the inscriptions show it is a memorial to Alcfrith. It also bears other names of persons who may have worked it and set it up, for this practice was occasionally followed, as in the case of the beautiful cross at Ruthwell, in Dumfriesshire, which formed part of Northumbria for a time. It is carved with scroll-work and scenes from Scripture, and besides some Anglo-Saxon poetry it bears the words, "Cædmon made me", Cædmon being the noted monk and poet who lived about the end of the seventh century. At Kirk Michael, in the Isle of Man, the inscription states, "Gaut made me and all in Man".

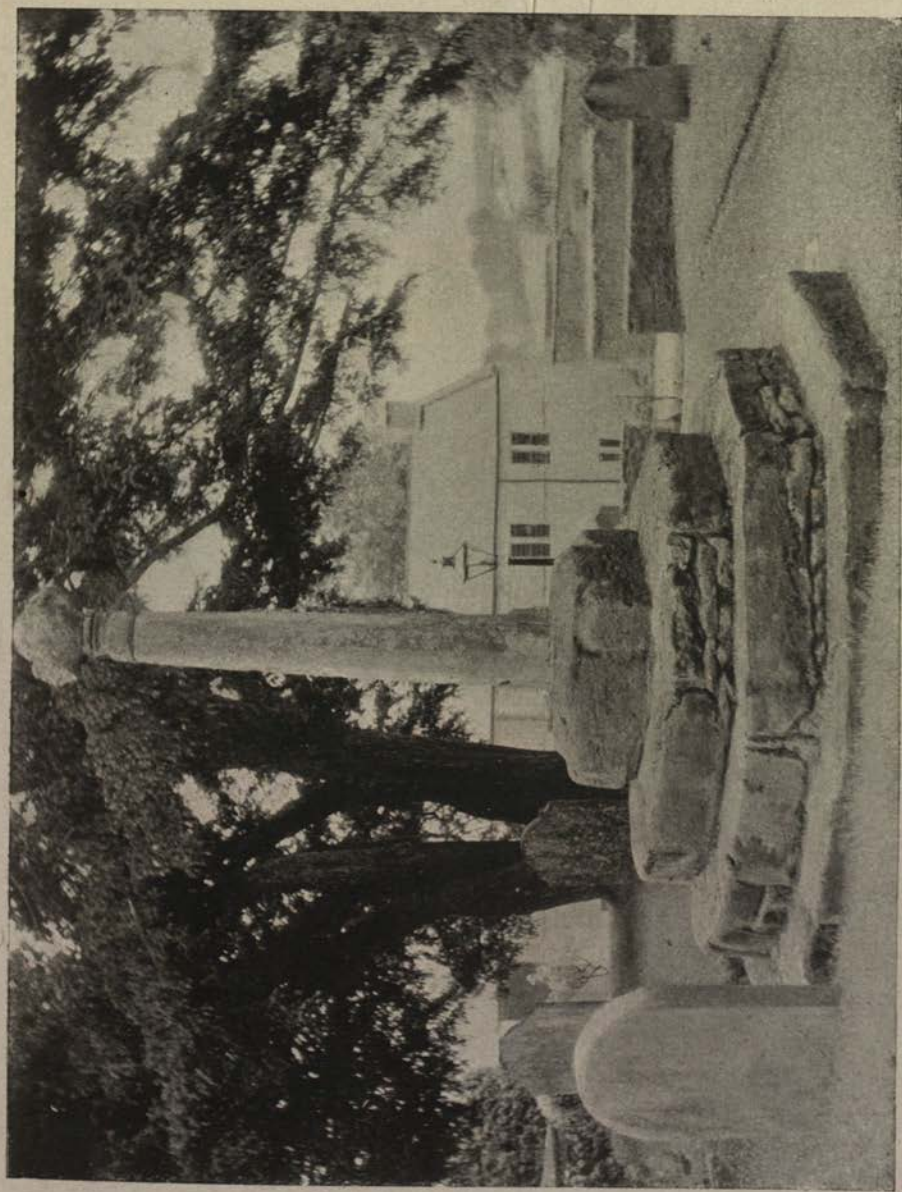
Memorial crosses are numerous in the north of England. That at Acca has been mentioned, and there are two at the famous Giant's Grave at Penrith, although their origin is doubtful. Not far from Alnwick is Malcolm's Cross, restored in 1774, marking the spot where the Scottish king was treacherously slain in 1093, and near the road which runs from Morpeth to Wooler is Percy's Cross, a memorial to Sir Ralph Percy who was killed at the battle of Hedgeley Moor, while another at Market Drayton, in Shropshire, also dates from the Wars of the Roses, marking the place where Lord Audley fell. At Mylor is the tallest cross in Cornwall; tradition says it was erected over the grave of St. Mylor, martyred in 411.

Somewhat similar to the memorial crosses are the Weeping Crosses erected on the site where a body rested for the night on its journey from a distant part of the country to its burying-place. The most elaborate of these are those at Geddington, Northampton, and Waltham Cross, the only three left of those which marked the resting-places of Queen Eleanor's body. A little-known one is

Raleigh's Cross, on the ridge of the Brendon Hills, in Somerset ; here the body of Joan, first wife of Sir Simon Raleigh, rested on its way to Nettlecombe, and some few miles away above the Haddeo valley are the Lowtrow cross-roads ; it has been suggested that this is a corruption of L'Autre Croix, as another cross formerly stood there.

Penitents would also confess their sins and receive punishment at crosses which also bore the name of Weeping. Then crosses often marked boundaries, especially the limits of ecclesiastical property. One of the best of these is that at Edale, which Dr. Cox considers of Saxon origin, and there is Siward's Cross, not far from Princetown, on Dartmoor, which Mr. Crossing thinks marks the boundary of the lands of Buckland Abbey. He is of the opinion that it was erected in the time of Edward the Confessor, when Siward, Earl of Northumberland, held certain manors in the district. On Ludworth Moor, Derbyshire, are the remains of two crosses known as Robin Hood's Picking Rods, which mark the boundary of Sherwood Forest. At other crosses on the boundaries of the forest were maintained priests whose duty it was to offer up prayers for the protection of travellers, and it is suggested that the curious name originated in the days when it was dangerous to travel through the woods infested with outlaws. Wayside crosses were erected along pilgrim roads, and also in some cases to mark the way ; some of the crosses on Dartmoor appear to serve the latter purpose, especially as they are on paths the monks would have followed.

Most of the crosses in the middle of towns or villages are market or cheeping crosses. The earlier are plain crosses on a base of two or three steps, while later they took the form of enclosed structures with a cross at the top. An elaborate example is the well-known cross at Chichester, a beautiful building, late Perpendicular in style, erected at the end of the fifteenth century, the cross which originally surmounted it being replaced by a vane in 1724. Salisbury has the Poultry Cross, a considerably restored hexagonal building, erected towards the end of the fourteenth century as a penance for an act of sacrilege, according to the story. A simple but very pleasing market cross is to be seen at



84. CROSS IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CROWCOMBE, SOMERSET.



85. THE ELEANOR CROSS, GEDDINGTON.

Castle Combe in the same county. These covered market crosses are less frequent in the north than in the south of England, but from them the market hall was evolved. As a general rule market crosses are to be found in places where there was formerly a religious house of some kind, as they were also used for preaching purposes on market days. All towns and villages with the word Chipping prefixed to their names originally possessed market crosses. Some of these give an idea of the local merchandise, such as the Butter Cross, the Poultry Cross, while, although the name lends no support, according to tradition, slaves were once sold at Alfriston Cross, in Sussex, but one hesitates to accept it.

Some are Sanctuary Crosses, marking the boundaries of places where sanctuary might be obtained. Refugees fleeing from their pursuers were safe once they could reach one. Occasionally we find a cross set up under a tree, and these may be some of the oldest in the country. In the dawn of civilisation trees were the object of pagan worship—the maypole revels being an echo of those far-off times—and the early preachers often stood under the shadow of their branches. The cross was set up close to this tree in order that the new religion might take the place of the old and reverence be transferred from the tree to the cross without too abrupt a break.

Many crosses have had adventures or been put to odd uses. A portion of one broken cross was used as a weight for a mangle, and the circular bases of others have been turned into grindstones. Eyam cross was buried on the moor, and that at Quethiock, Cornwall, was dug up some years ago. Whatton-in-the-Vale, Nottingham, possesses the fragments of a fine cross which resembles that at St. Donat's, Glamorgan; part of it was found in the wall of a cottage and part was dug up near the signpost at Whatton, probably its original site. Another, with interlaced work, supposedly of Scandinavian origin, was found in the church wall at Kneesal in the same county. The shaft only remains of numberless crosses scattered about the country, and in some instances the top has been restored, or replaced by an urn such as that at Childs Wickham, in Worcester, or a sundial as at Saintbury, in Gloucestershire.

Then there are what might be termed Plague Crosses, as according to tradition when plague raged, crosses near towns and villages were used in communicating between the infected places and the outside world. Provisions would be brought to the cross, to which the inhabitants would come and leave money in exchange. Crosses of this type, or rather their remains, are to be seen at Ravensworth, near Chester-le-Street, known as the Butter Cross, and at Cartmel, called Headless Cross.

But when all is said and done more crosses are to be found in Cornwall and Somerset than anywhere. In the Duchy every sort of cross, from the plain wayside cross in the hedge, such as that near Sheviock, to the elaborate canopied example at Mawgan or the more simple one at Lanteglos-by-Fowey. There are Celtic crosses, Latin crosses, and many with the old interlaced work resembling plaited osiers. Some are huge monoliths and some appear to be merely the head of the cross on its base, as at Trematon. Perhaps, however, the smallest of wayside crosses are to be found not far from Ugborough, in South Devon; tucked in at the bottom of the hedge the wayfarer will miss them altogether unless he casts his eyes on the ground.

In West Somerset every churchyard has its cross or at least the stump, and many villages and towns have a market cross as well. Crowcombe has two fine crosses, that in the churchyard bearing the figures of St. John the Baptist, a bishop, and a nun, while the village cross is a plain, graceful shaft topped by a small cross. One of the finest in Somerset is perhaps that at Strington, on the other side of the Quantocks. Williton has three crosses, and Dunster two—one in the churchyard and the old market cross beside the road to Minehead. The latter used to stand in the centre of the village, but was removed in 1825, when the shambles were cleared away. In most parts of England we are almost certain to find a cross somewhere, although they are very unequally distributed; Buckingham, for instance, possesses but a single stump, that on the green at Quainton.

XIII

THE VILLAGE GREEN

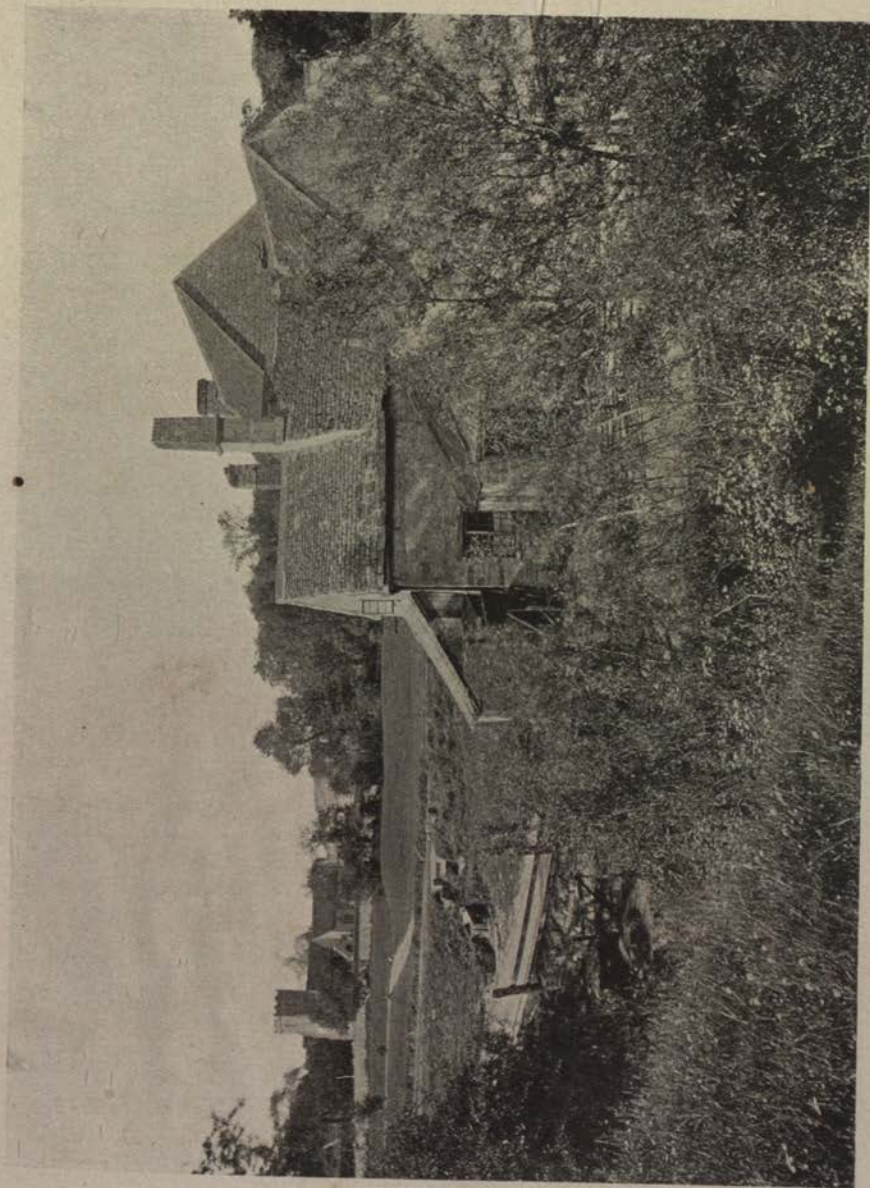
MANY are the scenes which may be regarded as characteristic of rural England, but most typical of all is the village green, that epitome of the countryside and its requirements. Grouped round the greens of many villages are nearly all the features common to a country community, and some, more favoured, possess in addition simple emblems of good government and modest enjoyment. On one side, half hidden by surrounding trees, stands the church ; close by is the entrance gateway of the manor house ; here is the vicarage ; there the home farm ; the tinkle of iron upon iron draws attention to the forge ; and in one corner, beside the road leading to the outer world, a swinging sign board indicates the inn standing back out of sight. Dotted round in picturesque irregularity are the cottages of the villagers, the gardens gay with flowers, while on the green itself may be found the well, the pond, and perhaps a pound.

Go almost where we will we shall find a village green, although in parts of the country they are comparatively rare, while some, alas ! have been enclosed and cultivated or even built over. Maybe the green is a tiny triangular strip of well-kept turf in the centre of a village at cross-roads, its size determined by the highways on either side, which have sadly curtailed its original area. On the other hand there may be an extensive piece of undulating common ; to this, however, the name green is perhaps hardly applicable, for the village belongs to the common rather than the other way about. Such may be met with in country where sand and gravel come to the surface and the soil is too poor for cultivation ; they are to be

found in Essex and Buckingham among other counties. As a rule the green is in the centre of the village, but occasionally it will be seen on one side of the church or behind the houses, this being often the case where the houses fringe both sides of a road.

What the common was to the villager's material wants the green was to his leisure moments, and since the enclosures he has turned the smaller green to the same purposes as the common so far as present circumstances and latter-day requirements permit. In days gone by the cottager was more or less self-supporting ; he cut his own fuel from the wood or the waste and he turned his cow and his geese out on the common, but now, owing to altered circumstances, he buys nearly all he requires. However, the village green still enables us to understand something of olden cottage economy. Here a flock of geese promenades with noisy shriekings, offering opposition to timid children and presenting a hostile front to the strange passer-by, whom they seem to pick out by instinct, as they invariably retreat before the native ; a donkey or a goat is tethered to a peg ; and round the pond a number of ducks divide the day between slumber and sudden bursts of activity.

But above all the green provided a recreation-ground for the villagers. Here the fair was held and here the bonfire was lit on Guy Fawkes' night. Life in the past was not the dull uneventful existence that some might suppose. Long holidays were not the rule as now, but numerous rural festivals provided fun and amusement for all. Most of these had some connection with the Church, for times of fasting were preceded and followed by days of merrymaking. Some of these festivals were connected with rural occupations, and perhaps the most important was the day sacred to the saint to whom the village church was dedicated, the village revel, as it was often called and as it is to this day in some places. Although the day began with a religious service it ended with mirth and merrymaking. Many were the sports held on the village green ; there were foot races and wrestling, the catching of a greased pig, and quarter-staff bouts. Archery might have its



86. CUBBERLEY GREEN, NEAR CHELTENHAM.



87. LEIGH HILL, COBHAM, SURREY.



88. A WEST COUNTRY GREEN, GITTISHAM, DEVONSHIRE.

place, and the women would race for an embroidered smock or shift. When dusk had fallen the fiddlers would strike up and gaily would the lads and lasses dance the country measures.

On the village green the quintain was erected, and merry were the shouts when the tilter failed to hit the board in the middle and was hurled from his saddle by the swinging arm or enveloped in a shower of soot or flour. This has now passed into the category of obsolete sports, and the only quintain left in England still stands, though desolate and forlorn, upon the green at Offham, in Kent. Before Puritan days every village possessed its maypole upon the green, but the opponents of rejoicing and dancing frowned on the May Day revels, and since their time the maypole has almost completely disappeared. A few remain as reminders of "Merrie England"; that really charming English village of the past, Fontmell Magna, in Dorset, has one, as has Shillingstone, not far away, while Barwick-in-Elmet, in Yorkshire, is proud of one, and others also survive at Ickwell, in Bedfordshire, and Warcop, in Westmorland. Here and there the rejoicings at the coming of May have been revived, but the dancing is confined to children, for we have grown more self-conscious than of yore. Clifton, in Nottinghamshire, is one of the places where dancing round the maypole and the crowning of the May Queen upon the green have been revived.

The village green was not only the scene of merry-making but the place of punishment. Here the stocks were usually placed, and the delinquent in his undignified position was made the butt of the boys who mocked him regardless of the retaliation that would follow when he was free. Here, too, was the village pound, in which stray animals were penned until their owners paid for their release. Pounds may still be seen, but they are falling into decay from want of use, or they have been utilised for other purposes. On occasion obstreperous roysterers and more dangerous characters have found a lodging in the pound when it lent itself to use as a temporary prison, and Shenley, in Hertfordshire, possesses a proper "lock-up" in the shape of a round

house by the pond. On the green at Harrold, Bedfordshire, is a curious little "round house", in company with another but open circular building, probably of the eighteenth century.

The cross also stood upon the green ; now, if it remains at all, there is but a stump, although it has not disappeared so utterly as the stocks, which, if preserved, are mere mouldering relics in the church porch. However, there are exceptions to every rule, and at Gretton, in Northamptonshire, the stocks and whipping-post are still in place upon the green, while Lymm, in Cheshire, rejoices in the possession of both stocks and cross.

Another feature of village greens past and present is the pump, that once important institution which is now regarded as the symbol of local pettiness, for any gathering that is contemptible is referred to as a "meeting about the parish pump". Yet though the pump and the village meeting may be set at naught by the townsman they can be of vital concern to the immediate countryside. In days of drought the water gives out and there is tribulation in the village ; if this is imminent the cottagers hoard the precious drops jealously lest any be wasted. In places the pump is enclosed in a picturesque little pent house, of which there is a somewhat modern example at Ickenham, Middlesex, one of the many villages destined to be absorbed in the maw of London. Some wells are memorials to a popular resident, or have been presented by a benefactor of the village, such as that at Stoke Row, Oxfordshire, a reminder of the generosity of the Maharajah of Benares. Maybe the place of the pump is taken by an old-fashioned bucket and windlass well, frequently covered by a simple roof ; to prevent accidents railings enclose it, and so the users must first unlock the gate. Pumps and wells are seemly and in keeping with a green, but what can be said of those villages which have so far forgotten fitness and tradition as to install a glorified standpipe ? Convenient it may be, but its place is not upon the green, but rather up an alley between cottages.

The pond must not be forgotten, for it is either in the middle of the green or at its edge beside the road, so that horses passing



89. SPALDWICK, HUNTINGDONSHIRE.



90. FRAMPTON ON SEVERN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.



91. THE GREEN AND LOCK-UP AT HARROLD, BEDFORDSHIRE.



92. EAST DEAN GREEN IN THE SOUTH DOWNS.

through can stop to drink. It may form the realm of a swan who stalks about with dignity, now visiting the cottages for food, now asserting his authority by driving off a goose which has broken some law of the green. The ducks, as being of little importance, are left in peace to follow their inclinations, although on occasion one of them does presume on his position and is brought to book. In dry summers the pond often saves the situation for some hill farmer ; at intervals through the day his carts bring down barrels to replenish the drinking-troughs of his animals.

In rare instances the green testifies to past importance ; on it stands some relic of the days when the place was the centre of its district. For instance, at Elstow, in Bedfordshire, Bunyan's village, is a fine timbered building, known as the Moot Hall, which dates from the fifteenth century. Modern erections usually compare unfavourably with the work of the villagers of the past—pillars and obelisks to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, modern coronations, or memorials to those who fell in the South African War.

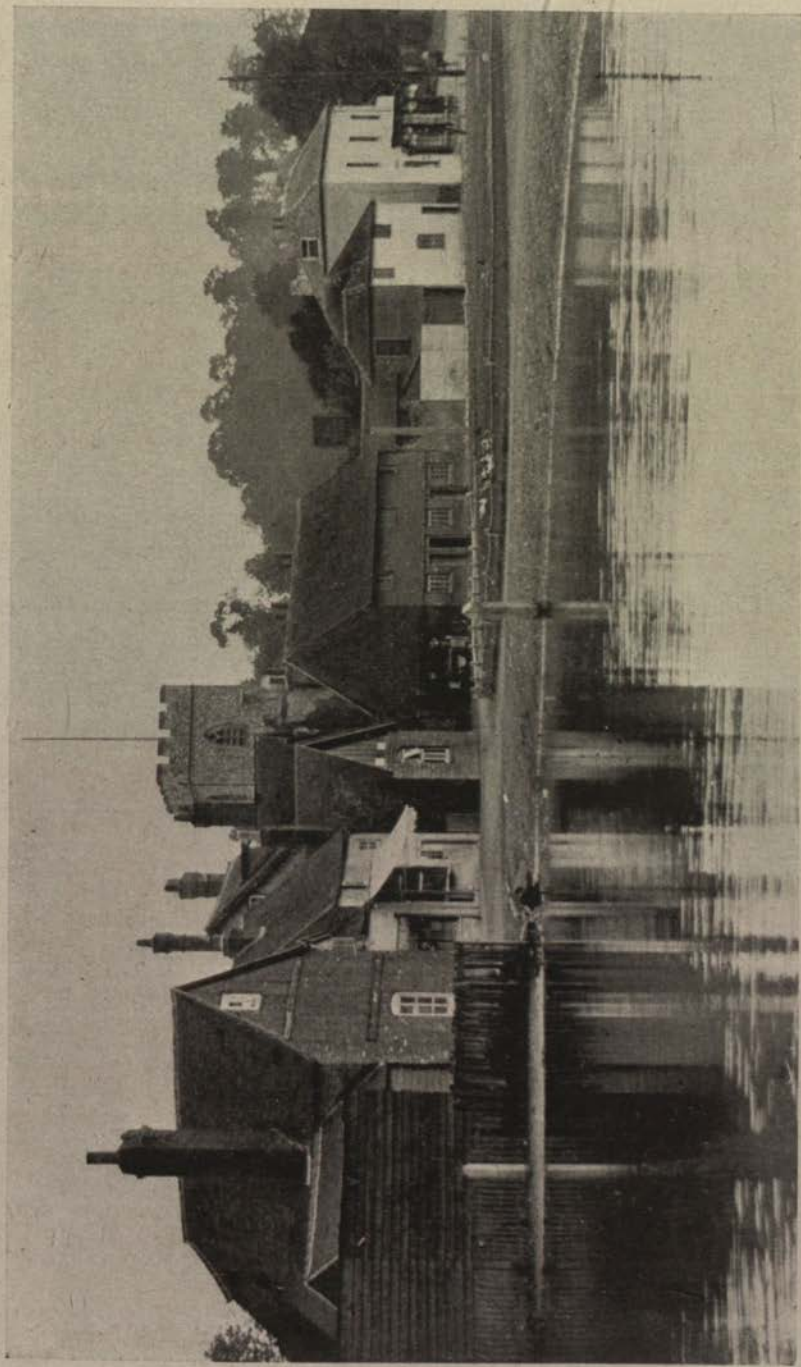
Greens vary according to the localities in which they are found. Here and there they are cut up by roads into a number of squares, triangles, or odd-shaped patterns ; one of them half surrounds the pond, on another is a tree, its girth encircled by a seat ; one long piece juts into the wood or the fields ; on another is the well ; the cottages are usually grouped in picturesque array round the outskirts, but one or two stand alone beside one of the strips. Such a one is Finchingfield, one of many charming village greens that Essex has to show. In some counties greens pass insensibly into commons, crossed by many paths and dotted here and there with clumps of gorse and bushes, their margins shaded by wide-spreading trees ; ponds there may be one or two, and in the centre a well-rolled cricket pitch roped off during the summer. Such may be found in Hampshire and Buckingham and Surrey, where there are also smaller greens, bits of commons like that at Cobham, or little strips of turf as smooth and well-kept as lawns. In the centre of Chalfont St. Giles, a typical English village, is a small green,

the playground of the children, but, alas! its surroundings are changing.

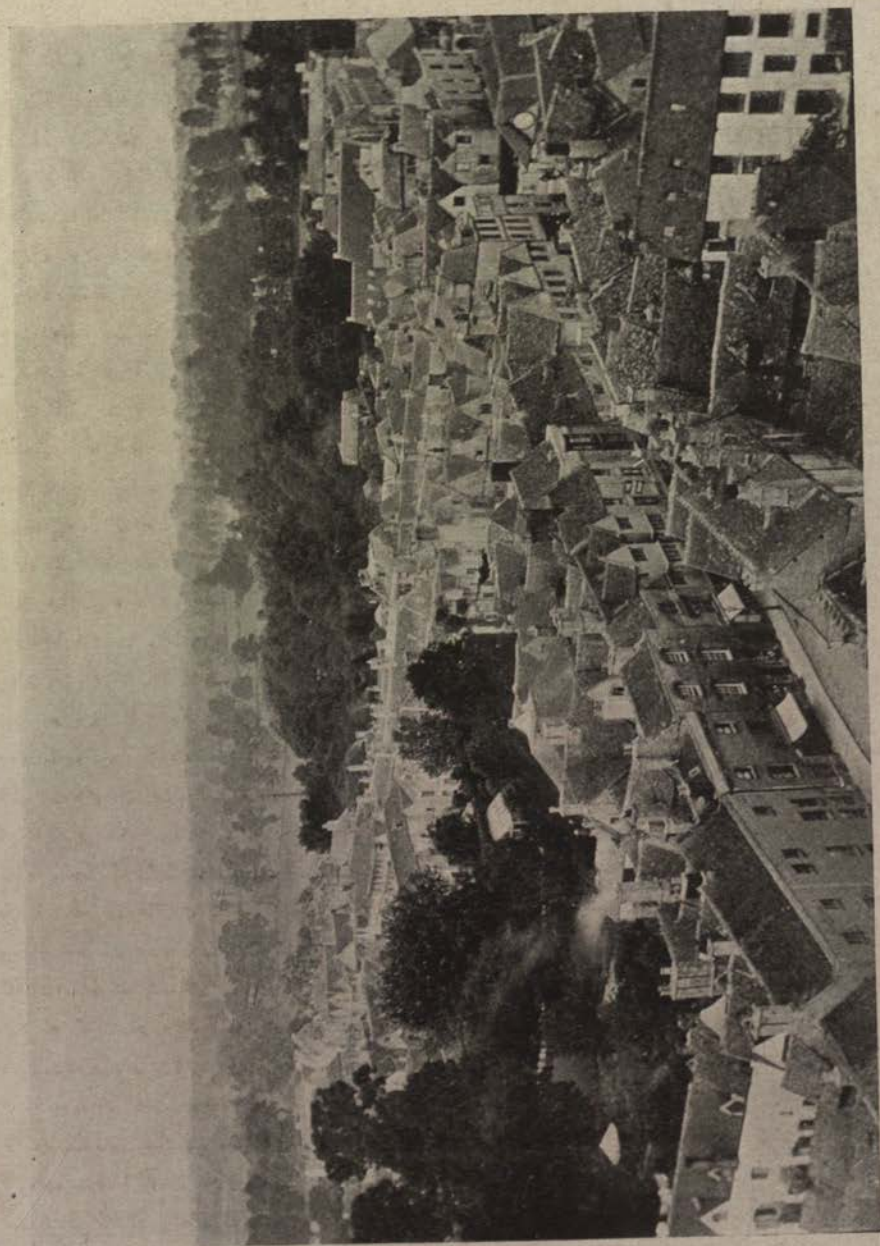
Sussex and Kent must not be forgotten, for both counties possess villages characteristic of rural England in every way. On the border of the two counties are Groombridge and East Grinstead with greens that will stand comparison with any. In the weald of Sussex are greens which often broaden into commons, and on the Downs are hamlets with greens so small they hardly deserve the name. The name of almost any county recalls some pleasant green—Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Hertfordshire and Warwick, all have their claims. Gloucestershire and Worcestershire share in the Cotswold greens; what a picture is Broadway with its gabled stone houses set round the green! Cubberley and Frampton-on-Severn are other villages in these shires, the latter as charming as can be imagined; timbered cottages and stone, with little dormer windows and well-thatched roofs, cluster round the green.

Greens there are beside a river where it is pleasant to loiter on a summer's day, as all will say who have lingered beside the Ouse at Nun Monkton, in Yorkshire, where the red roofs set off the colour of the turf. And Bosham green is beside the sea, not on the crumbling cliff like the lost green of Pakefield, in East Anglia, but on the shores of Chichester Harbour. From the churchyard it slopes gently to the quay; along one side flows the tree-bordered mill-leat, and a gate in a corner gives a vista over meadow and water. In the West Country greens are few and far between, but this only adds to the charm of Selworthy. Grouped irregularly round are its cottages with eyebrowed windows and roofs of deep brown thatch; the tree-clad slopes of Selworthy Beacon shelter it from the rude sea blasts, and one looks across the valley to the heights of Exmoor.

But wherever situated and of whatever description, the village green remains at once the centre and the background of English village life; on it generation after generation have gathered in revelry or met in sober conclave to discuss affairs; and to it our forefathers came on their daily round of trivial errands and in the stress of great events.



93. THE POND AND GREEN AT CHALFONT ST GILES.



94. A SOUTH COTSWOLD TOWN, TETBURY GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

XIV

OLD WORLD TOWNS

“God made the country, and man made the towns,” wrote Cowper ; a sentiment not exactly new in his day, for it had been expressed by a Roman writer many centuries before. Yet, if it was a true saying then it has far greater force to-day, when the all-conquering town continues to eat up the open country by the square mile ; farmsteads give place to huge factories which belch forth smoke and steam, while footpaths are replaced by long streets of mean houses all built to the same pattern. Fortunately this is not the case with the little country town, which, once important, has been passed by in the march of progress when trade and industry have been diverted to other centres. It may be a town, but it is in the country and of the country, interested in its life and work and looking on the great city as something strange and extraordinary. It may really be younger than the latter, but it has altered so little that it bears every mark of age, and in its life flows placidly and quietly, disturbed only by the excitements of an election or annual fair.

Our great towns are being so continually rebuilt and altered that they seem to have discovered the secret of perpetual youth ; the marks of age have to be sought out carefully, and even then throw little light on their past, whereas the little ones remain much as they were a century or more ago. Progress there may be, and signs of the times are not wanting, but the main characteristics of country towns change very slowly, so that those who wander about their quiet by-ways are able to obtain an insight into the habits of our forefathers and the life they led. Their fine houses still remain though sometimes sadly mutilated and degraded to base purposes,

and in the parish church their memorials bear testimony to many virtues and much thought for the poor. Perhaps, too, the church bears emblems of the trade which caused the town to flourish, of which an example will be found at Collumpton, where those of the weavers are prominent. The names of the inns reveal the trades of the towns or the business of the merchants who came to them, while the name of the market often throws light on the commodity which formed the chief item of merchandise,—the yarn market, the corn market, and the butter cross.

If we are not too critical we shall find much entertainment reading about the origin of many of our towns as set forth by the ancient chroniclers, who mixed fact with fiction so sadly when at a loss for explanations. In their veracious writings we read that the walls of London were built by King Lud, and that a son of his was the first to erect a castle at Norwich. Bath should be proud of its antiquity, for it appears that long before the Christian era one Prince Bladud, being affected with leprosy, became a swineherd on the site of the present town and discovered the virtues of its waters. Hudibras, the father of Bladud, was a most industrious builder of towns, for to him we owe Canterbury, Winchester, and Shaftesbury.

Putting myth aside we find Roman towns in plenty, usually built beside one of the great highways of the invaders, or at strategical points, or even in places where there were mineral springs ; some of these are inhabited no longer, or are lost beneath the débris of centuries ; but Cirencester is an example of a modern town which is smaller than that of Roman times. Some towns, like St. Albans and Colchester, have grown out of settlements of respectable age when the Romans came, settlements that were originally clearings in a wood or on a patch of good land sufficient for the modest agricultural requirements of the time. Most, perhaps, grew up naturally because they were situated beside a fording place, or later when sea-borne commerce began, because they were on a convenient river near the sea, but not so near that they would be open to the attack of a passing pirate ; perhaps, again, they were the centre of a rich grazing or agricultural district. A few of the oldest may have

been the industrial centres of the Stone Age, of which Brandon in Suffolk may be an example, although it is doubtful if flint-knapping has been practised there continuously since prehistoric times. It may be that a village and then a town has grown round the walls of a castle erected for military purposes, or followed the foundation of a monastery such as Peterborough, or a cathedral as at Wells; and very rarely one has suddenly sprung into being because a farseeing man has recognised its commanding position.

In one way or another most towns reveal something of their history, especially the small unchanged towns of the country. The churches and buildings show at what period they were most prosperous and when trade began to wane. All over Kent and East Anglia traces of the commerce with the Continent and the immigration of the Flemings are to be observed; the homes of the weavers and their guild-houses are still in existence; and Kersey reminds us that it gave its name to a special kind of cloth. Then Dunster is reminiscent of the cloths once made there and named after the town, and cloth-weaving was carried on at Witney in the tenth century. The little towns on the borders of Kent and Sussex grew up with the old iron industry, and in these days of mammoth guns it is seldom remembered that the first cannon cast in a solid piece was made in the middle of the sixteenth century at Buxted.

Some country towns are famous for what may be termed the by-ways of industry: thus Wymondham in Norfolk made taps or spigots of wood which are carved on its market-house, Daventry was once famous for its whips, Stapleford in Cambridge has made parchment for many years, and Blandford in Dorset used to be a centre of the Dorset button industry, carried on by the women and children in their homes. When Leland made his itinerary, Bridport was already famous for its rope; he remarks: "There be daggers made here", which looks as if he misunderstood the local term for the hangman's rope,—a "Bridport dagger". An example of a present-day small industry is the making of children's seaside spades and pails at Chesham.

Old towns show how the centres of industry shifted from one district to another. Although the trade may not have been actually carried on in the towns themselves, its influences can be seen. There are little towns with great churches out of all proportion to the present population, which indicates either that the needs of the place were formerly much greater or that the townsfolk were sufficiently prosperous to spend their money building and embellishing them. Close to the quays of many decayed ports are fine houses built in Tudor and Jacobean times, days of trade with half the world then known ; now they are tenements, or used as sheds and warehouses. Yarmouth is a town that has some particularly fine and remarkable examples of these old mansions. A few of such houses are to be seen in nearly every town in the east, and south, and west of England ; but the invention of the steam-engine and the power-loom brought stagnation to many, for their industries migrated to districts where coal was to be found.

Almost every country town possesses characteristics which are broadly similar ; each has its own individuality, and each bears the stamp of the district to which it belongs. This is shown in the style and material of the buildings, the uses to which they have been put, and the industries which have been carried on. Even the names of the streets are full of eloquence ; some will be found in town after town, especially those in the same part of the country, while others appear only locally. High Street is almost universal except in Western England, where Fore Street usually takes its place. Curious are the names of streets in some country towns : Norwich has its Rampant Horse Street, while Buxton boasts Wag-a-leg and others equally unusual ; Salisbury has its Endless Street, Shaftesbury Parson's Pool, and Shrewsbury Wyle Cop (supposed hill-top), Dog-pole (duck-pool), Mardol (grazing ground), and Shoplatch (Shutte Place). The narrow lanes and alleys are called, according to local custom, scores, opes, rows, alleys, backways, and passages.

The little town may consist of one long street with a few branching from it at right angles, or from a central market-place short streets radiate in every direction so that the whole is compact.

Sometimes it is situated in a steep hollow with houses straggling up the slopes, and sometimes it is perched on a hill with some streets so steep that they are cut in steps, such as Sherborne Lane at Lyme Regis, Church Street at Minehead, and the by-ways of many towns in the west and north-east. This town is full of Georgian houses with prim, straight fronts and high windows, while another is a mixture of early seventeenth century and modern patterns, showing how it has stagnated for a century or two and awakened.

Above all, most of these country towns bear witness to the local patriotism and corporate feeling of the past. Each was a little self-supporting community, relying on its own efforts. The market-house was built by the local landowner, as the inscription on its walls proclaims for all to read. The almshouses were erected by a merchant who felt he had duties to his less successful fellow-townsmen, or a disused pump is a memorial to a long dead benefactor. An ivy clad clock-tower is a reminder of a great event of history, or a picturesque guild-house recalls the day when an almost forgotten industry was carried on. In the main street is the grammar school at which many townsmen received their education. Perhaps it was built and given to the town, with a sum of money to provide the fees for a few poor but deserving boys, by one or two prosperous citizens whose memorials will be found in the parish church along with those of other local worthies. Maybe the church itself was rebuilt three or four centuries ago as a thank-offering for deliverance from some great danger. Upon the walls of the town hall are portraits of famous civic fathers of the past, and the archives tell the story of how on occasion corporation and townsfolk combined to curb the tyranny of a king or the rapacity of a lord. Perhaps they have bought further privileges and power with a fund to which all have contributed according to their means, or they have furnished a ship for an expedition against an enemy or for opening up commerce with a new country.

But, alas! all country towns are not like this; for there are some which have degenerated as they have decayed, until they show the squalor and misery of every great city, accentuated a thousand-

fold by the surroundings of green fields and smiling landscapes. In some streets each cottage shelters two or three families, for in these towns which have fallen on evil days within the past half-century overcrowding is as great an evil as in the industrial cities. Maybe a side turning leads to a courtyard where stands the battered remnant of an old mansion ; the half-opened door reveals a noble hall sadly knocked about, and some of its broken windows are stopped with brown paper and boards ; yet even in its forlorn condition it still gives some impression of its former grandeur. Perhaps, as its dirty signboard announces, it is now a common lodging-house, the resort of all the bad characters of the neighbourhood ; occasionally it is a sort of no-man's-land, a warren of the homeless, for the owner has long since disappeared.

Buried away in odd corners are numerous dingy ale-houses which alone show some sign of squalid prosperity, for here the meagre earnings of the thriftless are squandered on Saturday night. In the High Street a few shops make a brave endeavour to look prosperous, but their half-filled windows show only too plainly how hard is the struggle. There are narrow side turnings where slatternly women gossip in the dirty doorways, and half-clothed children play in the gutters. Now and again a slovenly figure emerges to shout a command to the children, and all too frequently the sound of strife is heard. Yet it is but a step from these scenes of squalor to the pure air and peaceful prospects of the open country, while the voices suddenly raised in anger drown the twittering of the swallows under the eaves.

Towns such as these do not belong rightly to the country ; they are bits of an industrial centre dumped down in the fields, the festering sore left by a local industry that died away even more quickly than it sprang into being, a product of the nineteenth century. When we think of the country town we call to mind one of the older ones which have stood still rather than decayed and spend a picturesque old age dreaming of the glorious past. What stories some of them could tell if only they could speak ; stirring tales of the time when the castle overlooking their streets was besieged,

how when it fell they refused to open their gates to a conqueror. There was the day when the monks were driven from the priory, since when town and building have decayed together. Then came the time when a brave but poorly armed rabble of peasants marched through on their way to meet the force sent to disperse them, and the evil hour when they streamed back defeated to hide where they could. Dragged forth by soldiers and condemned by an unjust judge, their heads were stuck up on the old gateway at the entrance of the town as a warning to others. A rightful monarch has found sour looks, or a claimant to a throne a riotous welcome, and a prominent citizen has been marched away under arrest amid the muttered protests of a crowd. In practically every scene of English history some of these little towns have taken part.

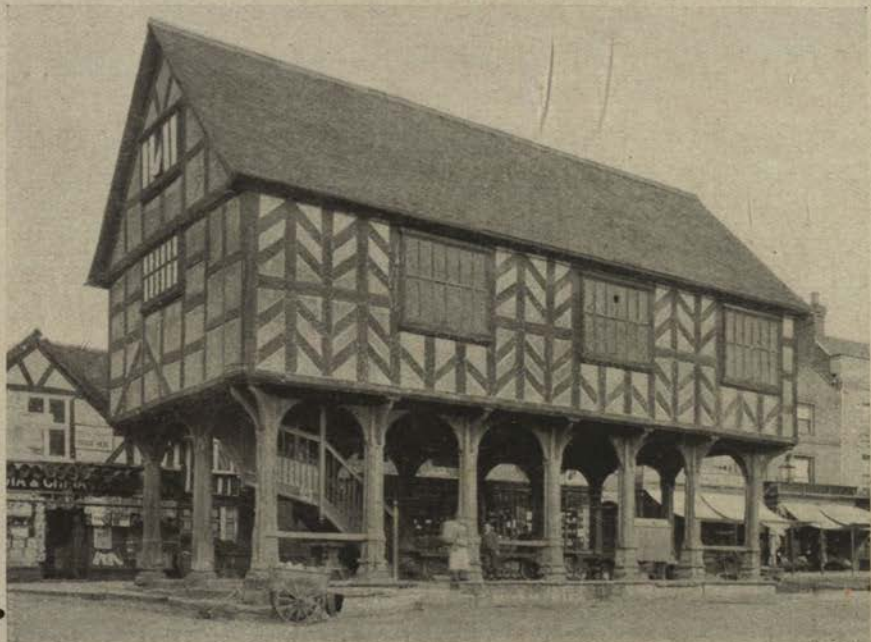
Those exciting days are over and the bustle of market day takes place no more, for the neighbouring city has stolen most of the trade. Formerly the centres of industry, they are now havens of peace for those in search of quiet. Grass grows between the cobbles of the lane to the disused mill ; no longer do long strings of pack-horses bring wool for the weavers ; the motors that buzz down the High Street do not cause the excitement of the daily arrival of the coach ; and even the annual fair has lost its glories. Yet were it otherwise their charm would be gone and they would merely resemble a modern industrial centre. Above is the deep blue sky flecked with clouds instead of a gloomy pall of smoke ; in the quiet streets are heard the sounds of the country, the lowing of cattle and the cawing of rooks ; and down the side turnings are peeps of fields and woods.

A Tudor doorway opens on a cool stone-flagged passage ; a narrow alley gives a glimpse of a little courtyard, with a pump in the centre, surrounded by thatched cottages ; to the runnel beside one of the streets the inhabitants come with their pails ; old signs swing in front of inns ; behind the rounded bay windows of the smaller shops may be seen a queer assortment of merchandise, clotted cream and crabs, string and strawberries. At the end of a row of houses whose age is belied by their modern fronts a Gothic

archway gives access to a yard; from here the overhanging timbered upper storeys are visible, showing their late mediæval origin. Perchance a battered holy-water stoop may be found hidden in the stable yard of an inn, while the remains of an ancient royal palace may be used as the local lock-up. There are vistas down streets of red brick houses towards the hills crowned with woods, and in odd corners are patches of turf protected by swinging chains. A bull ring tells of the pastimes of a ruder age, and an arcaded market hall or a piazza of the days when the merchants would walk up and down chaffering. Down the street come rumbling market wagons piled high with sweet-scented hay, and occasionally a farmer comes trotting in upon his cob. People do not pass one another without a word, but like old friends stop to hear the latest gossip, and when the evening comes and shops are shut they promenade up and down the street until supper.

Like the village, the little town is part of the country into which it melts. The shops give place to houses, the houses to cottages, then here and there a large house lost amidst the trees, and the fields are reached. Here a wood almost touches the last dwelling, there a side road climbs steeply up the hill across a little common. From the summit the town appears a huddle of house roofs above which rises the tower of the church; below the rising ground is a row of houses whose bellying roofs of stone slabs are broken at regular intervals by dormers; yonder is the old manor house standing in its oasis of green. Seen from a little distance the moss-grown roofs merge imperceptibly into the green of the opposite hill, and tall trees almost hide the church, so that one might be gazing on a hamlet rather than a town.

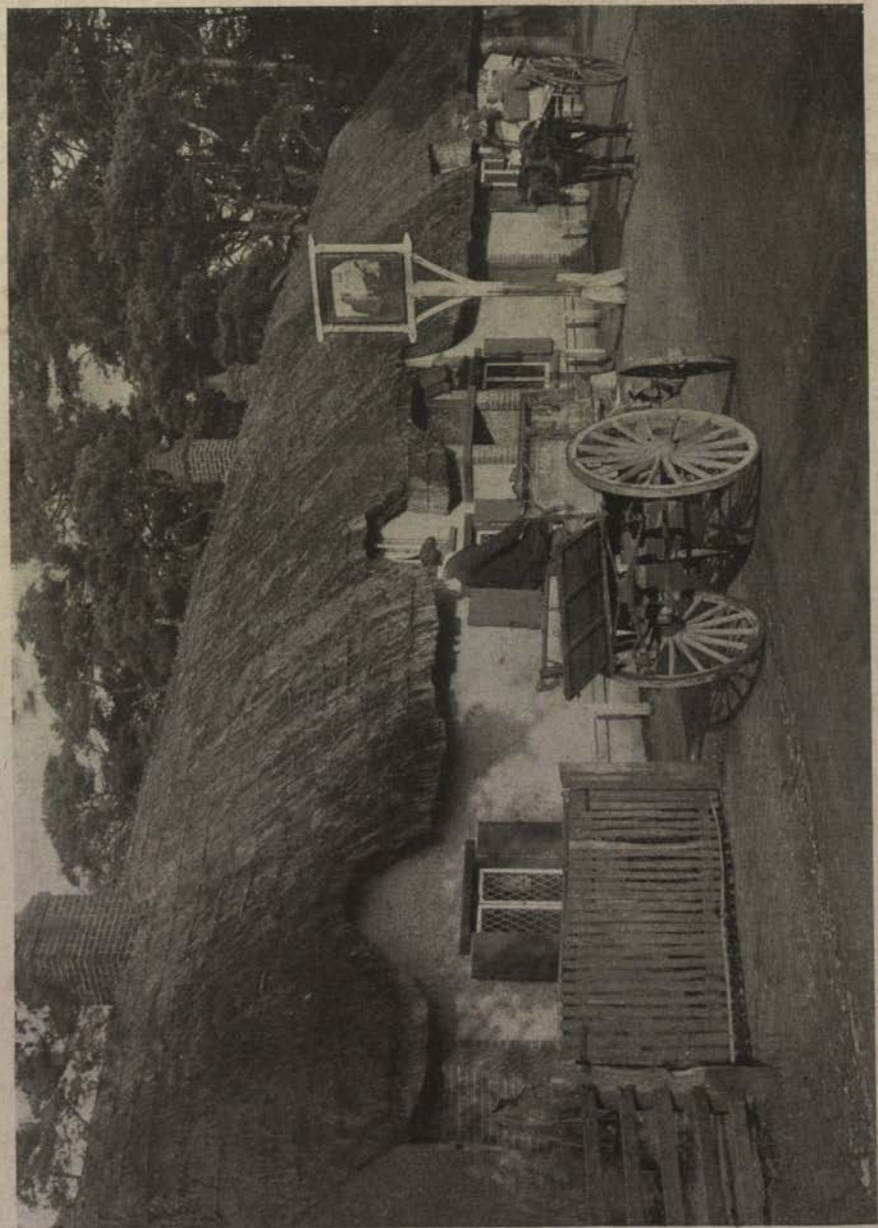
Such are the little towns of England, which many regard as sleepy and of no account, forgetting that in the past they have done as much for England and produced as many great men as the huge cities which pride themselves upon their progress. Times, alas! are changing, and before many years it may be that these fragrant old towns will have learnt modern methods and modern ways and have put their past from them for ever.



99. LEDBURY MARKET HALL.



100. LADY STREET, LAVENHAM.



101. A WAYSIDE INN, "THE CAT AND FIDDLE," HINTON ADMIRAL, HAMPSHIRE.

XV

COUNTRY INNS PAST AND PRESENT

FALLEN from its high estate as has the old country inn, even now we may say with the writer who lived three hundred years ago, "The world affords not such inns as England hath", though to judge by recent newspaper controversies many would interpret the phrase in a sense opposite to that of its writer. There are those yet living who can tell of the days when all who travelled through our land had to use the inn; when a long journey, especially in winter, was not undertaken with the light-hearted carelessness of the present day, when it is easier and cheaper to go five hundred miles than one hundred a century ago. Inns were then a necessity, used by high and low, rich and poor, and therefore they reflect the life and customs of the time, and their names and signboards speak of the history and great men of the past.

Some tell us that inns have existed since the days of the Romans, and point to some hostelry standing beside a road they made as dating from their era; others relate with pride that an inn in their village has lasted from Saxon times. No doubt there were inns in Roman Britain, but it is unlikely that they are represented to-day and when the pedigrees of the claimants to Saxon descent are examined they can seldom be authenticated. Canterbury is quite sure that the "Fountain" Inn of that city is the oldest extant, and the inhabitants tell you that the wife of Earl Godwin stayed there in 1029, and that the murderers of Becket arranged their procedure there. Whether this be true or not we know that it existed in 1299, for in that year, when Edward I. married Margaret of France, the German Ambassador lodged at an inn of that name.

According to tradition, the "Ostrich" at Colnbrook was an inn when John ruled and Henry 1. destroyed a previous house because of the manner in which it was managed. There are stories of a gang of ruffians who made it their headquarters, throwing the bodies of their victims into the river ; but many regard these tales as myths, and look on the "Ostrich" as a hospice. The "Seven Stars" in Manchester dates from 1356, and the "George" at Salisbury is reported to be as old. This is as it may be, but at least we know that Pepys stayed there, for he tells us he "lay in a silk bed, and very good diet", but he "was mad" at the bill, which shows that complaints about high charges are not new. So might one go on, citing old inns and discussing traditions of their age, but it will suffice to mention the famous "Fighting Cocks" at St. Albans, reputed to be the oldest inhabited house in England.

In very early days inns were not a necessity, for the lord entertained travellers, and those who were not accommodated at his hall were put up at the guest house of the monastery. But as travellers^o increased and the rights and obligations of the nobles waned, it became necessary to provide more regular accommodation. Thus the inn came into being, and frequently bore the name or arms of the manor on which it stood. But signs and names have by no means remained unaltered, for a change of owners would mean an alteration of name and sign, while the names of popular men of the day would be given to inns built long before their time. The Commonwealth saw many of these changes ; numerous "King's Heads" date from the Restoration, and some inns called "The Case is Altered" owe their names to the same cause.

Great numbers of our old inns are directly connected with the Church—the monastic inn, the pilgrim inn, and the church inn. The first named took the place of the guest house, although it frequently happened that an inn belonged to a far distant abbey or priory, but as a rule these were intended for travelling friars. The well-known "Star" at Alfriston, Sussex, is one of these ; it belonged to Battle Abbey, and possessed the right of sanctuary within its jurisdiction. It is on record that one John Birrel of Lydd took

refuge there during the reign of Henry VIII. Pilgrim inns or hospices are to be found on the way to mediæval shrines, and like other hostels connected with the Church may often be recognised by their names or signs. "George" inns are sometimes of ecclesiastical origin, one of the finest in the country, the "George" Hotel at Glastonbury, being originally a pilgrim house, built by Abbot Selwood about 1489; it provided pilgrims with board and lodging free for two days. It is a fine example of Tudor domestic architecture, and it is interesting to know that recent discoveries tend to confirm the story of an underground passage from the inn to the Abbey. Then there were the inns in which church ales were held, several of which survive to this day as the "Church" inn. Some say that the ale brewed at the monasteries was sold in the inns connected with them, an early example of the tied house.

Inns were part and parcel of old English life; everyone used them, none could do without them. After houses connected with the Church or bearing the arms of families came the trade inns, those frequented by merchants and tradesmen, the headquarters of the various guilds. The names of the inns in many quiet villages and sleepy towns remind us of the almost forgotten industries once flourishing in their districts. In seaports and fishing villages may be seen signs peculiar to them, while the "Fox and Hounds" and "Dog and Gun" can tell tales of the roystering sportsmen of the past.

Some inns recall exciting episodes in our history, the travels of a monarch, or the hatching of a conspiracy. The Stuarts are connected with many inns: at the "George" at Burford in Oxfordshire, Charles I. slept when he made his dash from Oxford to foil the attempts of the Parliamentarians to surround him, and at the "Saracen's Head" at Southwell he decided to surrender to the Scots. On the outskirts of Uxbridge is the "Crown", known as the Old Treaty House, where took place the abortive conference between adherents of Charles and Parliament; but if report be true the old house is to come down, or at least the Jacobean panelling in the Treaty Room is to be removed. Then his son Charles II.

had exciting adventures at the "Queene's Armes", Charmouth, and the "George", Bridport, when seeking to escape from England after Worcester.

The thought of old inns always conjures up visions of the great coaching houses, with their smiling hosts standing on the threshold to welcome their guests. Busy were the scenes witnessed in the courtyards of coaching inns on the main roads ; there would be the bustle when the passing coach waited but a few minutes to change horses, and the preparations for dinner or supper at those where the journey was broken ; there were the coming and going of post-chaises, and of gentlemen on horseback or private carriages.

In those days inns provided amusement for their guests as well as sustenance, and it is related that when the Exeter-Plymouth coach reached Chudleigh for breakfast a cockfight was arranged for the benefit of travellers. But these old inns are not what they once were ; the great ranges of stables have been pulled down or altered to suit other purposes, and few galleried courtyards remain. The "Bull" at Dartford possesses one, as does the inn of the same name at Long Melford, Suffolk, while that at the famous "New" Inn, Gloucester, has not entirely disappeared. And what tales may be heard in these old inns ; old prints of once famous coaches and spirited pictures by Alken and others recall the dangers and discomforts of coaching days. Some frequenter of the house will probably relate the incidents referred to, and tell the story of the day when something started the team before the coachman was ready and they trotted off to the next stage without guard or driver, or the morning when the hounds passed as the horses were being changed and the leaders dashed off after the hunt and were up at the death.

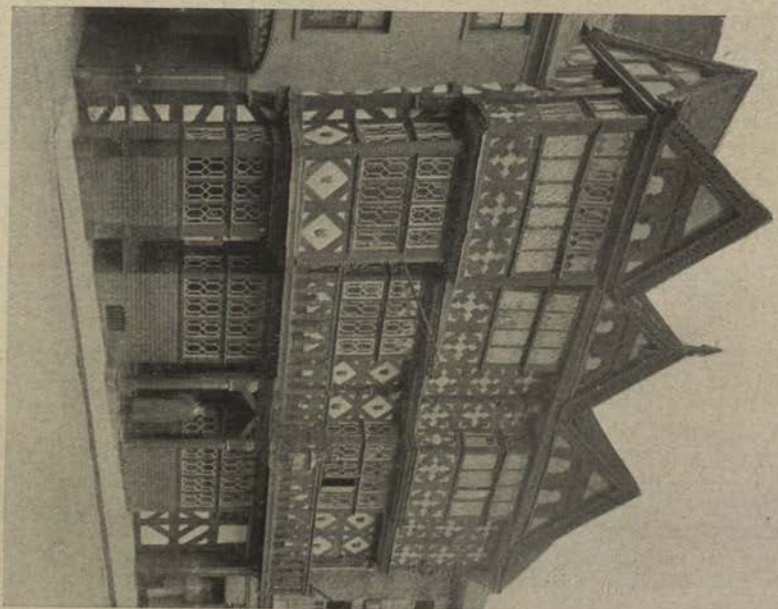
The story of old country inns is endless. On bleak heaths are sombre inns connected with the highwaymen, and the wayfarer stopping for refreshment may hear of Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, Tom Faggus, and other members of the cut-throat band whose doings the mists of time have surrounded with romance. Beside marshy creeks and rocky coves are inns containing deep cellars and



104. THE INN YARD, CHALFONT ST PETER.

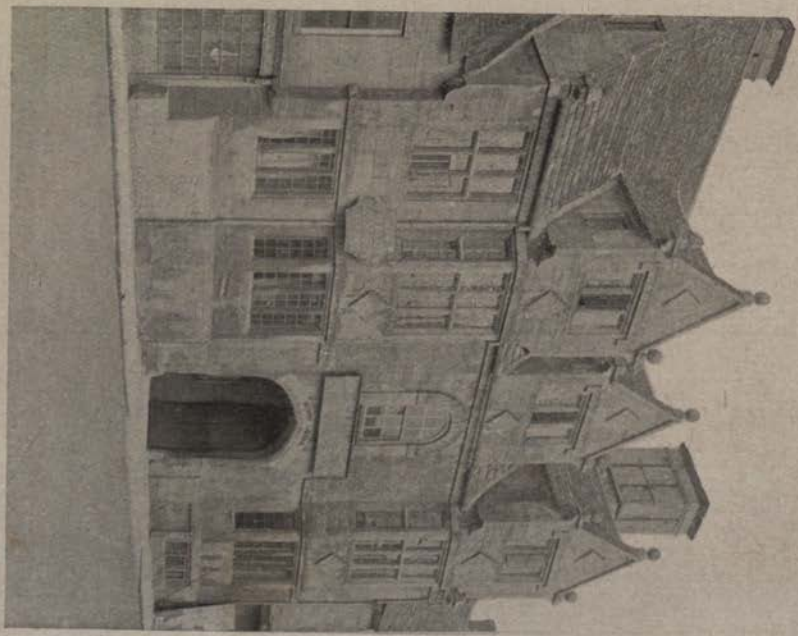


105. THE PANILLED ROOM FORMERLY AT THE
"REINDEER," BANBURY.



102. "THE FEATHERS," LUDLOW.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: HALF TIMBER AND STONE.



103. "THE TALBOT," OUNDLE.

secret hiding-places well known to the smugglers. Here is an inn long deserted ; it is evident from its gaping windows and rotting timbers that soon the name alone will remain to tell of the ghostly visitations that disturbed its inhabitants ; in another secluded spot is a tumble-down habitation, once an inn which fell into disrepute because of persistent rumours that travellers had been robbed or even done to death beneath its inhospitable roof ; and there are inns famous in literature. Some have been immortalised in a book found in every home, and others have seen a great writer at work or welcomed him in his hours of leisure.

Should we desire to make a modern pilgrimage, what would be better than a journey from famous inn to famous inn ! It would be well to include that fine old inn the "George" at Norton St. Philip, in Somerset, at which an attempt was made to shoot the Duke of Monmouth when he put up there on the march that ended at Sedgemoor, or the seventeenth-century "Lygon Arms" at Broadway, while a night at the "Feathers", Ludlow, should certainly bring us dreams of long ago. Others would be visited for their associations or because they are remarkable in curious ways. There is the "Ship" at Grendon Underwood, now a private house, which tradition says was patronised by Shakespeare ; the "Talbot" at Oundle, supposed to have been built from the stones of Fotheringay Castle ; the "George" Hotel at Huntingdon, standing on the site of a church, part of which is incorporated in it ; or "The Chequers", Osmotherley, Yorkshire, which boasts a fire that has not been extinguished for a century. The "Castle" Inn, Marlborough, is now part of the great school, so one can only gaze on its outside and think of its chequered history—manor house, inn, school—and the famous men who have sought hospitality within its portals, to say nothing of the tale concerning the ostler's wife and the Duke of Chandos.

From the famous hostelry we can turn to the quiet wayside or village inn where past and present blend and harmonise. Unhonoured and unsung, its gables, its yard, its low bar parlour traversed by heavy oaken beams, and its ingle-nook show plainly

its unbroken centuries of usefulness. It may be a once well-known coaching inn with artistic iron sign, or merely a little wayside house of call, a descendant of one of those ale-houses which used a bush as a sign, but whatever it be it is steeped in the spirit of the countryside. Spend an afternoon on the seat in the porch or in the settle and half the doings of the immediate neighbourhood will be learned. The farm wagon waits outside, the horses jangling the harness as they shake their heads, bringing out the carter from his long gossip; the gamekeeper, returning from his round in the coverts, stays to discuss the shooting prospects; one of the servants from the manor drops in with the latest news of the sons at their outposts in odd corners of the world.

When evening falls and the day's work is done the labourers come one by one for friendly intercourse, to chat over the day's news, to exchange the gossip of the district, the thousand and one things dear to the countryman's heart. When the shyness at the presence of the stranger wears off odd bits of country lore and ancient superstitions are heard, and broadsides of heavy rustic wit exchanged amid roars of laughter. To understand and appreciate the countryman's outlook on life his favourite inn must be visited, for here he talks over work and play, discusses high politics or village scandal, and here he airs his grievances.

The inn, too, is the headquarters of the village club, and in days gone by Club Day was a great event of the village year. Preceded by a flag and a band the members marched in procession to the inn, where the annual accounts were presented, after which came a mighty meal, followed by sports and "all the fun of the fair". At the inn the steward of the manor would entertain the farmers and tenants to dinner on rent days, and here the old carousals were held when good-fellowship meant the imbibing of much strong liquor.

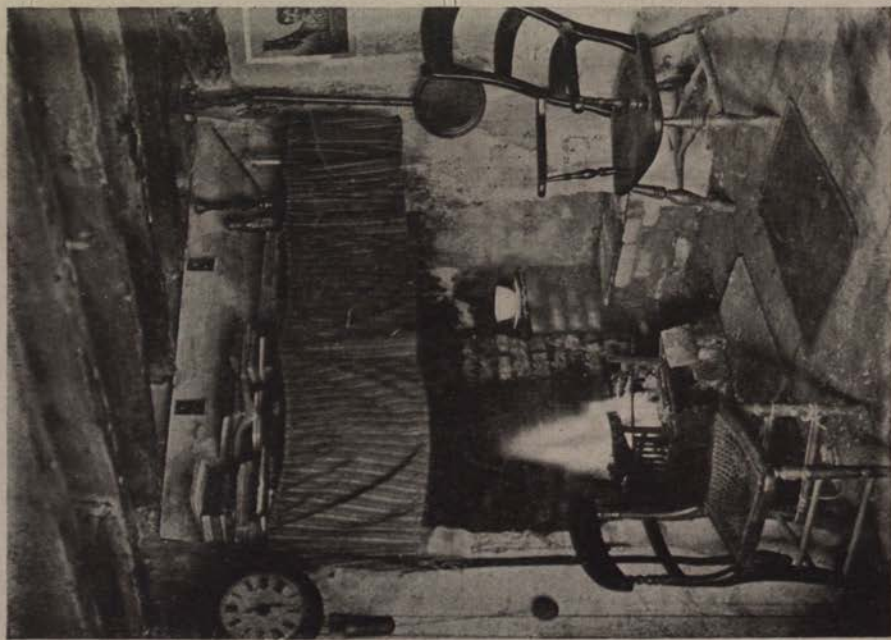
But times are changing and inns with them. The number of the smaller houses grows less, and the coaching inn, neglected for years, has awakened with the revival of the road and is being



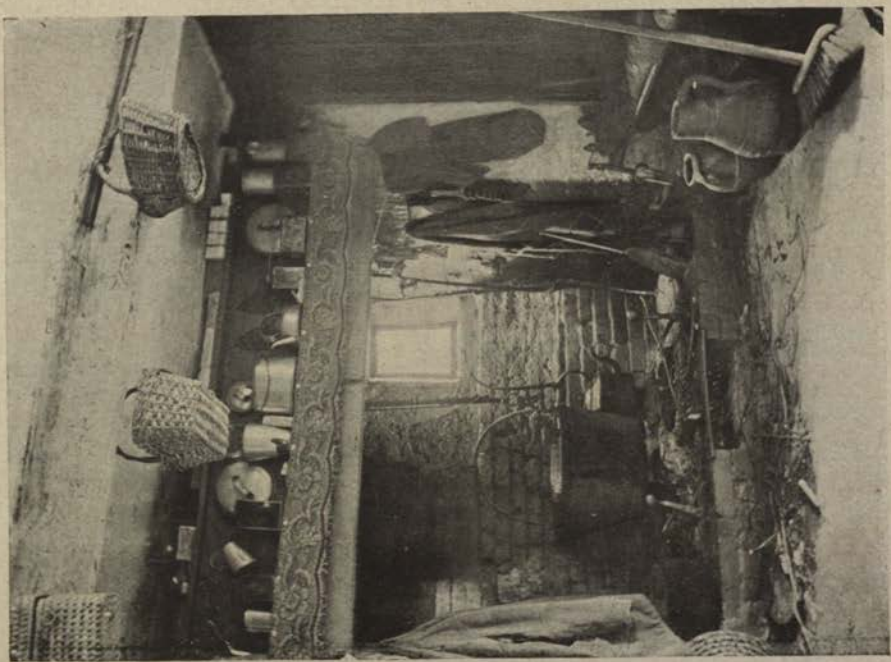
106. THE "FIGHTING COCKS," ST ALBANS.



107. A CHIMNEY CORNER AT THE "WHITE HART," BLETCHINGLEY.



108. A COTTAGE HEARTH AT EASING, SURREY.



109. AT YARMACOTT, SWIMBRIDGE, NORTH DEVON.

transformed into that hateful institution the smart hotel. Rebuilt to suit modern taste, garishness is taking the place of quiet comfort, and sham antiques are imported to give an air of age. Perhaps modern customs and ideas are reflected by these hotels as faithfully as bygone habits by the wayside tavern ; but the former belong to no country in particular, while the latter were truly English. The inn has played an important part in the social life of the nation and has been the common meeting-place of the highest and the lowest ; it has refreshed the pilgrim, given lodging to the sovereign, and provided the merchant with a place in which to bargain, and the peasant with a club requiring no subscription. Formerly the temporary home of the wayfarer and the meeting-place of the roysterer, its story is largely the history of social England for several centuries.

XVI

COTTAGE AND FARMHOUSE INTERIORS

SURELY no building is more akin to the genius of the English race than the cottage by the wayside or on the village green, the humble home of the countryman! No rural scene is complete without its cottage of brick and timber, with tiled roof shading from red to green, or the little dwelling of colour-washed plaster crowned with thatch. The cottage has always been one of the subjects of the painter, and poets have sung its praises, while to-day the fondest dreams of many are to retire to rural quiet and end their days in some modest flower-embowered cot far from the city's din.

With the picturesque outsides of our ancient cottages all are familiar, but the interiors are not so well known, for the countryman does not wear his heart upon his sleeve and is jealous of his home, inviting only intimates and tried friends to accept his hospitality. If the exterior of the cottage is a memorial to the simple art of the old village builders the interior and its furniture still reveal something of what has been termed the peasant civilisation of the past. The cottage had its traditions as well as the mansion, and the former was more truly English, more redolent of the soil, than the latter, for the village craftsman was little influenced by introductions from abroad, and built his house and made his furniture according to the styles which long use had proved serviceable and yet not rude.

Improvements came slowly, for the countryman has always been conservative in his ideas, considering that what was good enough for his father was good enough for him. Even now, when progress is more rapid, he still clings to many of the old ways and is not always eager to vacate the old, damp, insanitary, but picturesque

cottage, in which he has lived so long, for the more convenient but ugly dwelling of to-day. In the fittings of his home he is loath to part with those to which he is accustomed, using old implements as long as they can be obtained and then grudgingly taking to the new. But times are changing, and the new is rapidly supplanting the old, yet in many parts, especially those remote and off the beaten track, the cottage interior of olden time is comparatively common and the old utensils still in use, although with them are others quite modern and new-fashioned.

Step up the flagged or cobbled pathway to one of these old cottages and raise the latch of the door if it be not already open. The stone of the threshold is worn by the tread of many feet, and if there be children in the household there is in all likelihood a barrier of some sort, or perchance a half-door, that ingenious contrivance peculiar to the cottage and stable. Inside, the little room, usually none too well lighted, is rendered still more dark by the pots of flowers that crowd the window-sill. Broad flags of stone or red tiles form the floor, and the ceiling is spanned with the joists of the room above. On one side a wooden partition hides the stairs to the upper floor, and at their foot is a door leading to the wash-house.

But the central point, as of all homes, is the hearth, and if the cottage be a very old one it will be the flat open hearth of our forefathers. From the oak beam which spans the broad opening hangs a little pleated valance, and perhaps above it is a narrow mantelshelf on which are displayed the family treasures, although more probably a row of canisters and tins will be there. On one side, at an angle to the hearth, is the settle, a far from comfortable seat to all appearance, but well screened by the straight high back. When the chimney is very deep there are seats on either side of the fireplace in the ingle-nook itself. On the centre of the hearth is a little heap of half-charred wood and ashes, soon fanned into flame when the bellows hanging on one side is brought into use. On the warm bricks by the smouldering fire the household cat finds her favourite sleeping-place, stalking indignantly away when the embers are revived. Close at hand stand the tongs and a long two-pronged

fork or a rake-like implement. Fire-dogs, although fairly common in the farmhouses, are seldom seen in the cottages, and then are of the plainest description, but there will be a trivet or two of wrought-iron, usually a circular or triangular frame supported on three legs. Some, however, are more elaborate, the tops being wrought in simple curves and patterns with a projecting handle. Sometimes there is a chimney crane on which hangs kettle or cauldron, although it is perhaps more usual to see it depending from a pot-hook or hanger at the end of a chain fastened to a stout bar fixed across the chimney above the hearth. By an ingenious arrangement the pot can be raised and lowered at will, while another useful device allows a kettle to be tilted to fill jug or teapot without touching it by hand or removing it from its hook.

With such a hearth there will be in one corner of the chimney an oven for baking bread ; this is heated in the old-fashioned way by lighting a fire within it. When every cottager kept his pig a side of bacon always hung curing in the chimney, but this is less commonly seen nowadays. Often the old hearth has been filled with a modern kitchener or has been bricked up to take a grate of ancient pattern less convenient than the open hearth. In districts such as Sussex, where the old iron industry was carried on, firebacks bearing the date of casting stand at the back of the hearth, but few of these remain in the cottages, although they are not rare in farmhouses and inns. If the cottage is the home of a family once better off a brightly polished brass or copper warming-pan hangs beside the hearth, and close at hand stand one or two good old-fashioned cooking utensils such as skillets or posset pans, and on the mantelshelf a pair of candlesticks of brass or pewter with a few mugs of the latter metal.

Next in importance to the hearth is the dresser, adorned with the survivors of a service of the once popular willow pattern and plates of buff ware with brightly coloured borders, with maybe one or two jugs or mugs of that highly glazed pottery seen in many cottages and farms and almost every village inn. The cheap modern china bought to replace the gaps caused by breakages



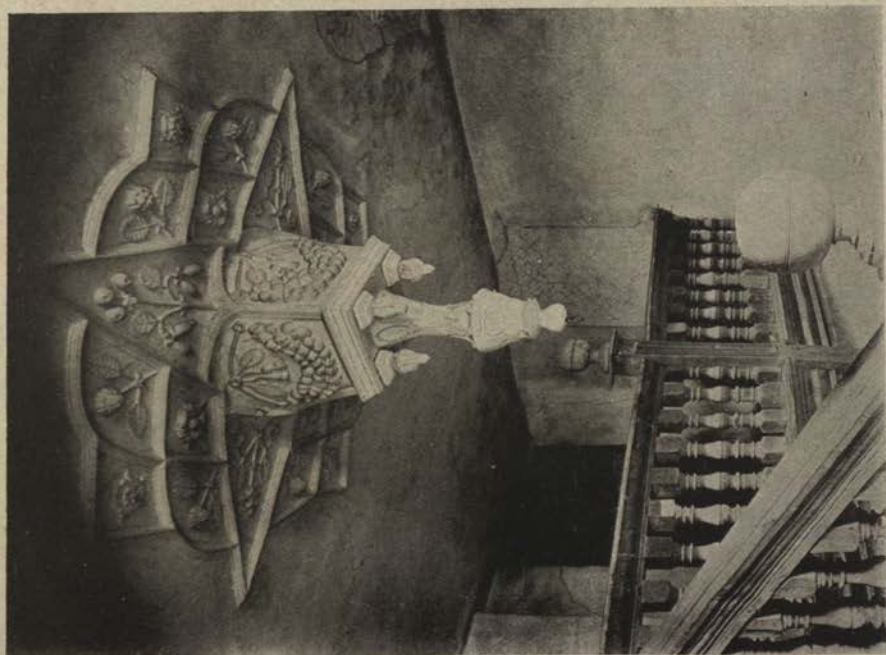
110. A SURREY FARMHOUSE KITCHEN.



111. NEAR BARNSTAPLE, NORTH DEVON.



112. A BARN AT BRINSOP, HEREFORDSHIRE.



113. THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS, CHELVEY COURT,
SOMERSET, LONG A FARMHOUSE.

looks very poor beside the old ware, and the "Made in Germany" cup and saucer, with its crude picture and inscription of greenish gold, is given an honoured place as much for its associations as its intrinsic worth, for it was a gift to mother from the daughter at work in the distant town. On the dresser, too, are the salt-box, the flour-dredger, and perhaps a knife-box, with the candlestick handy when bedtime comes.

From hooks in the ceiling-beams hang bundles of herbs, a battered storm lantern, a basket or two for carrying produce to market, and perhaps a ham. In cottages, too, the good man's Sunday coat or hat may be hung out of harm's way in this manner, while sometimes thin laths are fixed to the underside of the beams, making racks where linen is put to air. Oddments are also stored in little "cubby holes" made in similar fashion, while in farmhouse kitchens the hooks are fully employed.

The furniture is homely and plain; a deal table at one side where it is not too much in the way, a few wooden chairs of simple design, and in the corner a Windsor chair with arms, a cushion in a patchwork cover filling the seat. This is father's chair, seldom used by other members of the family, but always brought forward as the seat of honour for favoured guests. Here and there an old linen chest or corner cupboard may be seen, a present to the housewife from the great family in whose service she had been before her marriage.

In the farmhouses some such articles are often found, for many farmers are descended from the younger branches of old noble houses; massive oak tables are in the kitchen, bureaux and gate-leg tables, china cupboards, and very occasionally an early piano in the parlour. A grandfather's clock seldom has a place in a cottage; the farms still possess them, but in the majority of cases they are ornamental rather than useful, the duty of telling the time devolving on a cheap alarum clock on the dresser.

If the interiors of old cottages give an insight into the domestic lives of the humble folk of a bygone day, the farmhouses often preserve the arrangements of old manor houses, for numbers of

them were originally the country homes of once famous families. Entering through a projecting porch, over the door of which may be the half-obliterated arms of the original builder, one comes to a passage formerly the "screens," a door at the side leading to the kitchen, which was once the great hall. Huge ceiling-beams cross the room from end to end, and wide, stone-mullioned windows give light. At one end is the open hearth, the fittings of which resemble those of the cottage, but are usually more elaborate, while over the mantelshef is the old rack in which the spits were placed, now used for guns. Often a modern kitchener fills the recess next the open hearth. Huge slabs of well-worn stone cover the floor, and some of the old panelling, sadly knocked about, may remain on the walls. A great dresser will probably occupy most of one side, and heavy doors of oak give access to the adjoining rooms.

These old farms sometimes contain fine staircases, and the parlour, or drawing-room, is frequently panelled, although as often as not the wood is painted in brilliant colours. The ceiling may consist of an elaborate pattern in plaster, and in rare instances the arms of the builders or the families into which they married appear as a frieze in painted plaster, or are carved on panels or on chimney-pieces, while more often the upper rooms contain quite handsome chimney-pieces. But, as a rule, these old manor houses are so mutilated and altered that the original plan is difficult to trace. Those which have always been farmhouses are usually just as interesting, although they resemble larger cottages; built of local material, according to local tradition, they are homely and comfortable, eminently suited to their purpose, and in keeping with their surroundings. The passages are flagged with stone, and in the dairy are broad shelves of slate where pans of milk stand cooling until the cream rises to the top. But such slow methods are falling out of use, and morning and evening rises the prolonged shriek of the separator, which does the work quickly.

There is no great gulf between the ornaments of the cottage and the farmhouse, at least so far as those of a past era are concerned. In the days when communications were indifferent, the

farmhouse and the cottage depended on the village shop and the annual fair, so that the old crude yet delightful china ornaments are to be found in both. Now, however, many farms possess quite elaborate drawing-rooms, containing furniture and ornaments such as delight the conventional suburb, although mixed with them are articles beloved by the collector. Examples of the old-fashioned "fair" china are to be seen in most country dwellings, although it is getting rarer every day; if the shepherd and shepherdess have no place, the spotty dog or the curious-looking cat will be there; if the brindled cow with or without a milkmaid is absent the little house will be seen near a sportsman with a gun, or maybe a Toby jug, but the last named are rare. Many of these china ornaments represent a celebrity of the day, and some commemorate a famous event; an example of the latter is the set of characters and places made notorious by the Rush murder of more than half a century ago, but these are not often seen, being eagerly bought up by collectors. Snuffers may be looked for, and perhaps a rushlight-holder is mixed up with kettle-holders, bead mats, a stuffed bird in a case, or a model of a ship.

Hanging on the wall is a faded sampler, worked by the housewife or her mother, and not far away is a cheap oleograph of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, for a picture of the "good Queen" is never missing from the cottages of the older folk, although in the farms they are usually banished to the bedrooms. Photographs are there, too; a smiling wedding group whose stiff poses show the unaccustomed self-consciousness of being photographed, a soldier son, or a group beside a wooden shack in Canada. Elsewhere is a sheet almanac adorned with a battle picture or a child and dog, and some curios sent home by the sailor son on foreign service.

Farmhouse and cottage homes such as these, simple and unpretentious though they be, have produced many whose names are household words and untold thousands of unknown men and women whose daily work has helped to make England as we know it to-day.

XVII

THE AWAKENING OF NATURE

SPRING is a season that approaches slowly with timid steps, although on occasion it dances forward joyously for one day only to retire again the next. There are bright, warm, sunny days in the depth of winter when Nature seems to awake from her sleep, and only the chill in the shadow and the bare branches remind us that the time of spring is still a long way off. But this dream of the golden time to come soon passes, for the short day quickly dies, and the frost and cold hold the land in their grip once more. As the year grows older these fine days come more frequently and the hours of brightness last longer, the trees begin to bud, green shoots appear in the shelter of the hedgerow, the clear call of the thrush is heard, and the starling whistles joyously from the house-tops, but, even so, there is no day on which we can say, "Lo! spring is here."

The end of winter is so closely linked with the beginning of spring that one glides imperceptibly into the other, and the latter is already well advanced before we realise its advent. Autumn comes suddenly and takes us by surprise, as it were; a brilliant summer's day gives place to a crisp, chill dawn, and we know that summer has gone; a faded shadow of its former self returns now and again to remind us of its departed glories, but it is never really the same. But when Nature begins to awaken into new life she stirs uneasily in her sleep, opens her eyes once or twice, and then slumbers once more. Snow and sunshine, icy winds and balmy breezes, alternate from day to day, so that it is impossible to say whether it be spring or winter.

Perhaps half the joy of spring is the anticipation of it. As



114. SMILING APRIL: A "BOTTOM" TRACK BETWEEN HAMPDEN AND WENDOVER.



115. THE LESSER CELANDINE. ONE OF THE FIRST
HARBINGERS OF SPRING.



116. CHERRY BLOSSOM.

winter wanes, how eagerly we search for the first snowdrop, and how carefully we look along the foot of the bare hedge for the first signs of the cuckoo pint. In a mild winter, spring is never very far away, and if we know where to look we can always find some precocious flower that has bloomed before its time ; but it is our favourite wood or lane that tells us when it is really near. The grass comes up strong and green through the dead leaves at the edge of the beech wood, the delicate shoots of the wood-sorrel appear, and the lesser celandine may be found along the lane. Patches of golden daffodils wave in the grass, while the spear-shaped leaves of the wild hyacinth give promise of late April and early May. No longer are the woods almost silent as they have been during the past month or two, for the "pink pink" of the chaffinches is heard on every side, and from the folds come the quavering bleating of the lambs. In the treetops the rooks are busy inspecting new sites for summer homes, apparently discussing their advantages and disadvantages from the clatter they make. No longer do the bare twigs of the trees stand out clean-cut against the hard, brilliant blue of a winter sky, for their outlines are almost lost in a filmy laciness that tells the swelling buds are almost ready to burst, especially those of the horse-chestnut, which glisten in every gleam of sun. Then comes a day of biting wind and sleet, and we know that winter is still with us.

These days grow fewer, and come at longer intervals, the air grows more balmy, the catkins come and go, the almond trees drop their pink beauty, the wild flowers come on so fast that to mention all we see on a walk would make only a catalogue, the hedges are alive with life, and once more we know that Nature is awake. In the brakes the green tufts of the willows are a joy to look upon, all the trees are now edged with green, and the birds begin their courting. Then one day we hear the never-ending call of the chiff-chaff, which tells us that spring has really come.

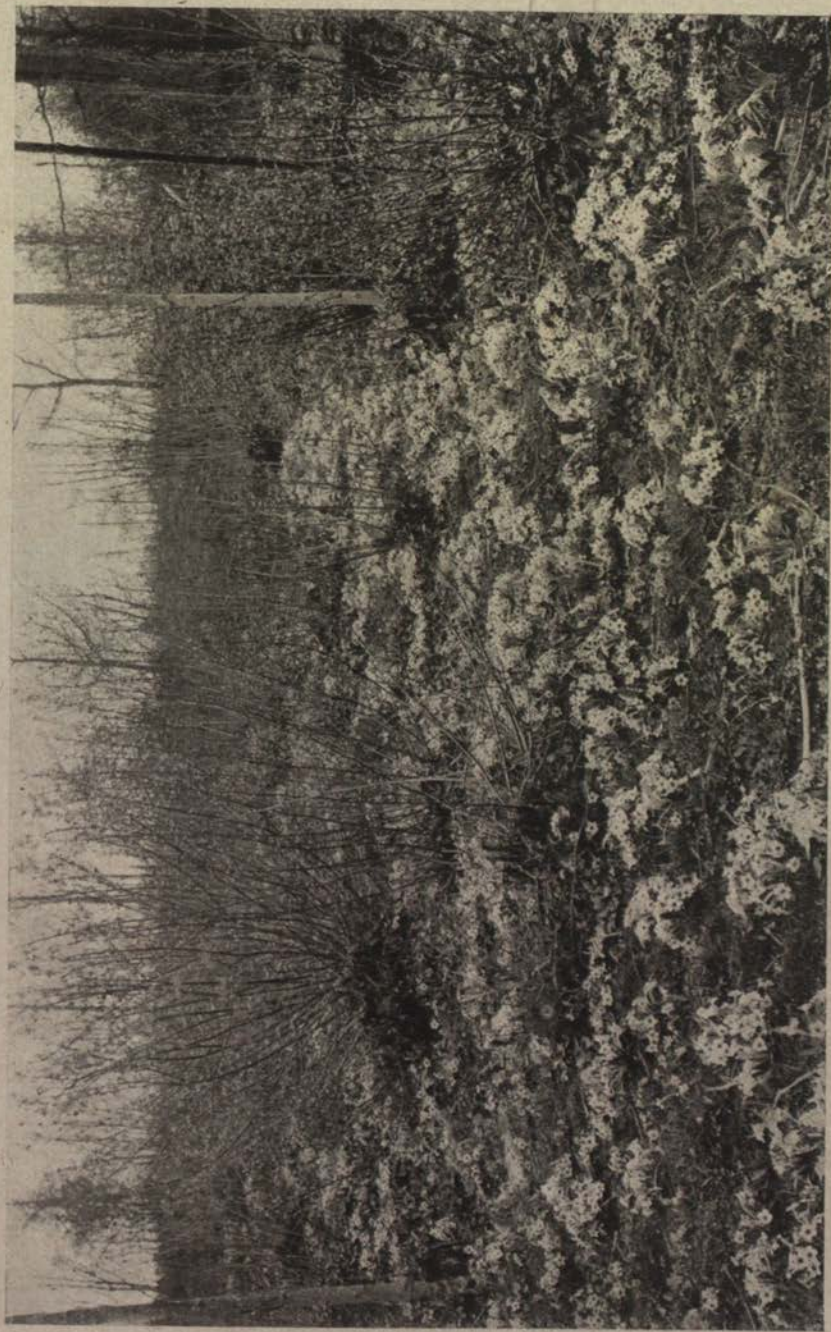
Even if spring is not our favourite season we welcome it more gladly than any other, for it is the promise of all the year, the beginning of new visible life, and the end of winter, which, at its

best, is somewhat cheerless. What can compare with the beauty of the primrose wood in spring? Even the patches of anemone and wood-sorrel are not more beautiful, although some, perhaps, will say that the splashes of blossom of the wild cherry amid the still sombre woods, or a hedge snow-white with blackthorn, are more pleasing to the eye. Then there is the glory of the larches putting on their new season's dresses, and the delicate green of the beech wood. Each of us has his favourite, and as we see them one at a time, it is easy to say that each is most beautiful of all. The ruddy tint of the elms must not be forgotten, nor the golden gorse that comes to cheer us when brilliant colour is lacking. But, perhaps, the beech wood is most lovely of all. The tall, smooth trunks that edge the paths, turning them into the aisles of some vast cathedral, the delicate green of the leaves through which the light filters, giving that peculiar glow so soothing to the eye, never noticed elsewhere, and the sprouting undergrowth where the trees are not planted too closely, make up a veritable scene from fairyland.

The hills, too, have their time of change. Not the rolling ramparts of grassy downs which are always green except in periods of drought, although even in their case the turf becomes more vivid in hue at the time of fresh growth after winter rains, but the wilder hills that are almost useless to the cultivator and sheep-farmer. Bracken and heather cover their steep slopes, with here and there patches of whortle-berries, and when their purple beauty fades with the summer the growth withers and dies until the higher ridges turn a dingy brown. But with the approach of spring a new mantle of green verdure gradually covers the hills. At first it appears towards their bases, broken here and there by clumps of golden gorse. As the season advances it spreads slowly upwards until only the highest points remain as rusty stains on the bright spring dress, and then they at last finally disappear at that moment when spring holds undisputed sway over the land.

And so spring goes on from joy to joy. The primroses disappear, the anemones die down, and then in their place the edges

117. IN THE PRIMROSE WOOD.





118. SPRING DAWNING IN THE FIELDS AND BOUGHS: CHERRY BLOSSOM NEAR THE CHALFONTS.



119. "AS BITING WINTER FLIES, LO! SPRING IN SUNNY SKIES."

of the woods are carpeted with sheets of misty blue. The meadows are flecked with gold and white, and the old farmhouse is half hidden by the mass of pink-and-white blossom of the orchard. Once the winter has really departed, one wonder is succeeded by another, and the countryside grows more beautiful every day, until at length it reaches the more even tones of midsummer.

As the tide of life waxes stronger there is so much to see that half is forgotten before it has really been observed. The squirrel in the woods, the mouse in the hedge, and the hedgehog taking his first walk abroad, delight us in early spring but are lost in the thickening foliage as the year advances. How eagerly we listen for the first call of the cuckoo, and strain our ears to hear it again to be sure we have not been deceived; even then we are not certain that some farmer's boy has not been mocking us, until its musical call again breaks forth in some other district. Then there is the search for the first nest, and the pleasure of finding one with its owner already sitting. No other season can show delights like these.

There is no time in all the year which holds such advantages for observing the birds and beasts as the spring, when they are beginning to mate and the growth is not thick enough to prevent their movements from being seen. If the peewit is the bird of winter with his mournful cry, he is certainly the spirit of spring with his joyous flights, his tumbling and acrobatic performances in the air, now flying lazily with slow-flapping wings, now poised at one angle, now at another. How the sun glistens on his plumage as he stands in the meadow for a few minutes; then up he goes, calling to his mate, who soon joins him. Higher and higher they fly, and then suddenly he turns a somersault, falling a few feet before resuming his slow flight.

When spring has really come, turn where we will we find new life. The bees are busy collecting pollen from the blossoms; butterflies and insects appear; the young rabbits can be watched at play. Then, when the fields have barely sprouted, the hares can often be seen in the evening. Glance over the hedge, and there

may be three or four in different parts of the field, and sometimes one will run along the lane in front of us, until he finds a gate beneath which to disappear.

Nature's choir sings at its very best in spring, and no music that man has yet composed can compare with it. At first there is the roar of wind and the sighing of the pine woods, like the sea beating on the shore, and the quavering bleat of the new lambs. As the season advances, voice after voice joins in, until the full choir is engaged. Hardly has the day dawned before the first clear notes are heard, and then at its close the thrush calls from the treetops and the nightingale trills in the thicket. All seems very still in the beech wood ; but if we stand awhile and listen, the air is full of sound, almost noiseless sounds as it were—the cooing of the wood pigeon, the hum of insects, the call of the chaffinch, the crow of a cock pheasant, the sudden harsh chatter of the woodpecker, a sudden rippling note, and the rustle of the undergrowth as some creature passes on its way.

How beautiful the earth smells, especially after a refreshing April shower, when one may almost watch things grow. Mingled with the sweet scents of the blossoms, there is that indescribable odour of the earth which never comes again through all the year, even after heavy rain which breaks a long drought. The rain, too, brings the rainbow and beautiful cloud forms, for which April is famous.

Spring is so full of delights that hardly have we had time to enjoy them all ere the fleeting season is past and gone. The delicate greens of the budding leaves quickly become the full foliage, the blackthorn dies down, the cherry blossom falls, the golden laburnum withers, and the lilac turns brown. Beneath the hawthorn the blossom lies thick, the candles of the horse-chestnuts light up the broad leaves, the guelder rose dots the thicket with its white balls of blossom, and last of all come the snowy elder flowers as spring passes into summer, and Nature's sweet growing time is over for another year.

XVIII

THE COMING OF AUTUMN

ONE day, as the fall of the year approaches, we wake to find the sun streaming through our casement, as it has done on fine mornings for several months past, but somehow there is a change. There is a sharpness in the air and a mellow softness in the sunlight, while a slight smell of decay arises from the damp herbage. It is the first day of autumn.

Autumn ! To many, far too many, it is one of the saddest words in the language, for in it they see only decay and death, not recognising that it is really the beginning of new life. There is after all no dead season of the year, and that period which so many regard as the end is the beginning. The plant dies down only to renew its strength for the coming year ; the young leaves, forming within the twig, press the old ones out of the way, and so autumn is really the first sign of spring. All through the year some plants are dying, but it is only in autumn, when Nature in general goes to sleep for a little time, that it becomes markedly noticeable.

When autumn comes with its gales and frosts the townsman shivers, draws the curtain close, and wheels a comfortable chair to the fire, but the countryman goes out to see the beauty of the landscape. If autumn be the time of Nature's death, then she dies amidst a blaze of glory, for unless early gales and heavy rain cause the leaves to fall before their time, no month is more gorgeous than October. It is true that the wild flowers have gone, that the song of the birds is almost hushed and the brilliancy of their plumage dimmed, but we have the tints on the leaves, the wild

berries of the hedgerow, and the rich colour of the newly-turned earth.

There is nothing melancholy about a beech wood in autumn. It flames into a riot of yellow, and red, and orange gold. If a few evergreen trees are to be found in the wood, their dark leaves heighten the effect as the slanting rays of the October sun play on the dying leaves shimmering in the breeze, until the forest seems aglow with molten fire. In spring the white blossom of the wild cherry stood out from the bare branches, providing the only patch of colour in the scene, and now these trees can be picked out by the splash of crimson they make amid the copper of the beeches, the dark green of the sombre pines seeming almost black in contrast. The oaks are not quite so brilliant in their autumn dress, but their russet leaves remain when all the others have gone. In the hedgerow the maples show their presence by their rich yellows, while the tall elms are yellow and orange.

In the clearing of the wood the warm brown of the bracken makes broad bands of colour against the dark trunks. Long shadows fall athwart the view where the rabbits sit basking in the sun, their white tails bobbing up and down as they scuttle away when anyone approaches, and some noisy blackbird hurrying off with shrill outcry gives the alarm. The air is very still, and the lightest breeze rustles the leaves and brings them fluttering down in showers, while a sudden gust sends them flying round in eddies.

On the common the gorse bushes crackle as the seed-pods break, and tall withered stems, topped, perhaps, with down, are all that remain to tell us of summer. Fungi grow in the damp places, and the hollows are marked by pools of water, while along the common's edge are seen the delicate blossoms of the harebell. In places the hedges are thick with old man's beard, and the falling leaves reveal many a hidden nest.

Colour dominates the landscape on a fine day in autumn. Round the homestead are clusters of golden ricks, and the thin column of smoke and the hum which can be heard from afar



120. AUTUMN PLOUGHING BY CRUMMOCK WATER.



121. "THE RUSSET LEAVES LIE THICKLY STROWN"; GLODDAETH WOODS, NORTH WALES.

denote that the thresher is at work. In the apple countries great heaps of golden and rosy-cheeked fruit, presently to be used for cider-making, decorate the orchards. The dull yellow of the stubbles is turning into rich brown and red as the ploughman with his team of white-and-brown horses turns the furrows, behind him following a flock of rooks and gulls eager for the grubs and worms he brings to the surface. Mingled with his cries as he urges his team onwards, and the jangle of harness as he turns at the end of the field, rises the bleating of the sheep in the fold in the hollow near which the shepherd's hut has already been drawn into position. As a volley of shots rings out from the wood where the pheasant drive is in progress, all the birds rise in a cloud and wheel round and round the field for several minutes before settling down to their search for grubs once more.

There is plenty of work a-doing, for the country has to prepare for the many short days of winter and the coming spring, when the earth shall blossom forth once more. From the root-field comes the creaking farm cart laden with swedes which are being built into a clamp near the shelter of the hedge, while in the thicket the woodman is busy cutting the underwood. Beneath the quick strokes of his hook the bushes are soon cut low, and, if hurdle-making is to follow, the sticks are laid in rows all facing one way. Then when October has well advanced the hurdler comes, and under his deft hands the hurdles soon take shape until there is quite a stack. From time to time the cart arrives to take a load to the sheltered hollow in the hills where the fold is being erected for the lambing.

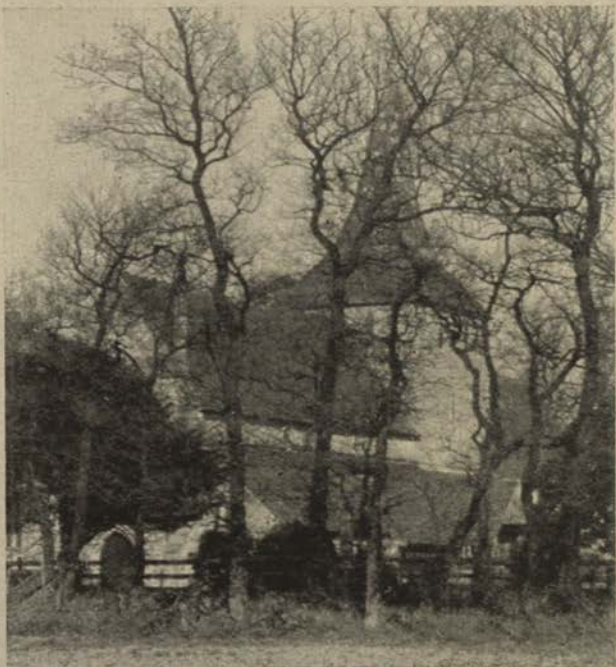
Over the meadows, flocks of peewits, uttering their mournful cry, wheel and hover, now settling down together, now rising all at once to fly round in a circle before alighting in the same spot. The starlings are busy in the turnip field searching for fly, while crowds of chattering sparrows fight amidst the hedges or invade the rick-yards. Up and down the hedgerows the long-tailed tits swing on the long thin twigs and clamber up the branches, all the

while uttering their funny little cries. The squirrels may sometimes be seen laying up their store of nuts and beech-mast, but the hedgehog has probably already taken up his quarters for the winter unless the season be very mild.

In some ways the early autumn is the most glorious time of all the year. After a long hot summer the fresh exhilarating days of October act like a tonic on the jaded nerves, and if the summer has been wet and gloomy a fine autumn sometimes follows, trying, as it were, to make up for past disappointments. There is warmth without heat in the autumn sunshine, and it brings out the sweet smell of the freshly-turned earth and that damp odour of decaying vegetation which so many dislike.

Over the smithy the crimson of the fast-thinning virginia creeper makes even the tiles seem pale in comparison, and the red berries on the holly in the churchyard tell us that Christmas is not far off. The village street is thick with leaves, and on Saturday the children, free from school, sweep them up for the garden.

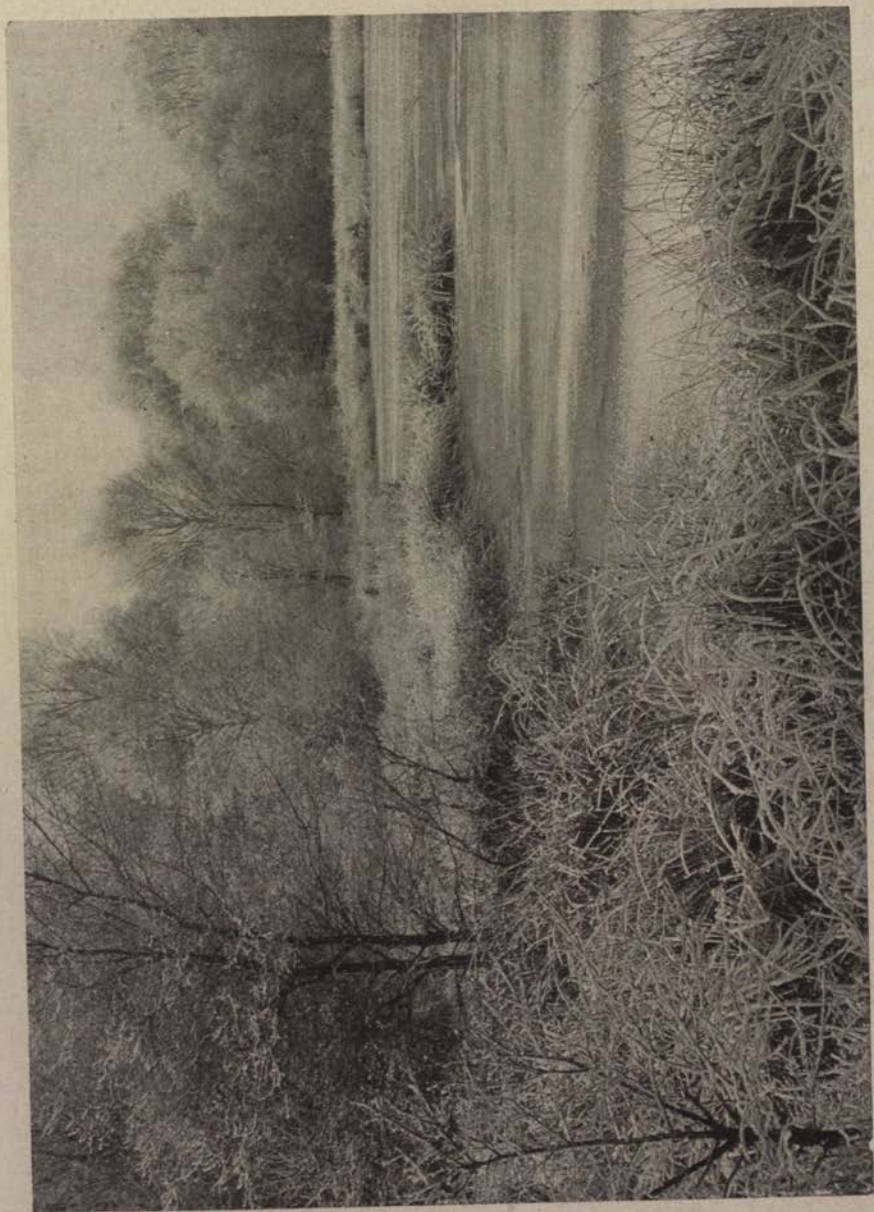
It is only when the sun has set that the sadness of the season is really present. As it sinks slowly into the fast-gathering mist, the colour suddenly leaves the wood, and a chill breeze arises, bringing the leaves to the ground. All the rich reds and browns and yellows disappear, leaving only a dull muddy buff behind. The grey twilight steals slowly over the landscape, and from the dead colourless undergrowth arises a smell that has little of sweetness in it, and the damp mist floats over the low-lying ground. It is this sadness of departing day that has given autumn a reputation that it does not altogether deserve.



122. AUTUMN IN HAMPSHIRE : THE LEAFLESS BRANCHES
OF THE TREES REVEAL THE VILLAGE CHURCH.



123. AUTUMN ON THE COMMON : LEY HILL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



124. WHEN FROST ENCHANTS THE POOL.

XIX

WINTER WALKING

HE who takes his walks abroad only in the fine warm months of the year knows little about the countryside and has not plumbed the delights of walking to their very depths. In winter the cold invigorating air and the struggle against a blustering wind set all the pulses tingling and make the body glow with pleasant warmth, in marked contrast to the hot days of summer, when the panting wayfarer makes for the nearest shade, which he is loath to leave.

Set forth on a wild blustering day when heavy rain showers blot out the landscape at irregular intervals. Only the man who really loves Nature in all her moods would venture out under such conditions ; but, oh ! the joy of a walk on a day like this, and the deep satisfaction that is felt as he subsides into a comfortable chair at the end of the tramp. He chooses his route with care ; due note is taken of the direction of the wind, and he maps out a journey that will pass woods and rising ground that will give shelter at decent intervals. But it is unfamiliar country that provides the most sport ; a map may be studied and an itinerary with the advantages mentioned chosen, or he decides on his route only as he proceeds, relying on his knowledge of the possibilities of the district to forecast what lies on the other side of the hill.

Then there is the glory of the hills. Winter adds a spaciousness to the landscape which is absent at other times of the year. The whole of the countryside is laid out beneath one ; the farmsteads hidden in their encircling trees during the spring and summer are now plainly visible ; the church is seen through the lacery of the branches ; and the village in the valley is laid bare. The path can be traced down the hillside through the thicket and onwards past the leafless hedge until it meets the high road, at other

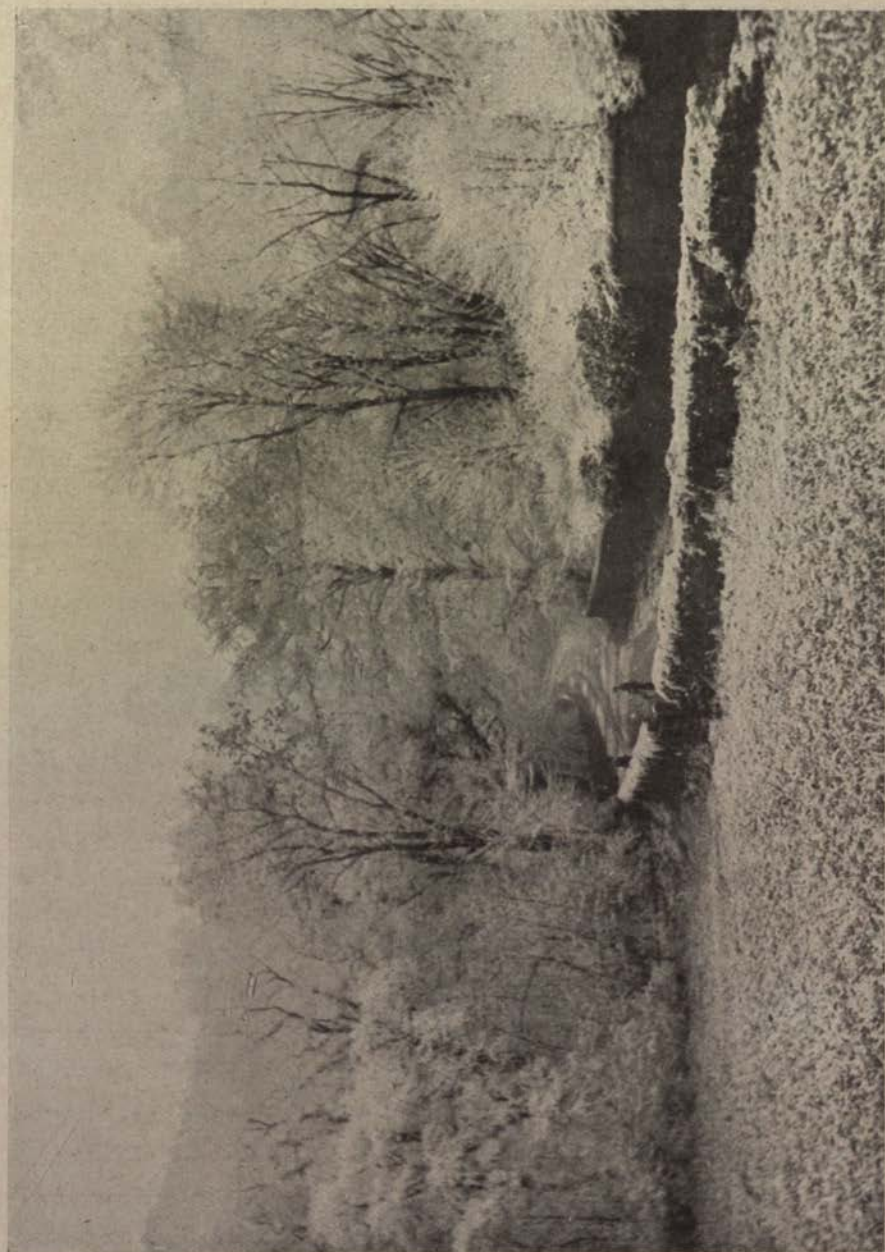
times invisible. The blustering wind whistles through the bare branches of the trees which all incline one way, and now and again the pedestrian is glad to descend below the ridge out of the gale which roars over his head. Above, the clouds scud past or pile up in dark masses which are dissipated in a sudden shower of stinging rain; now and again they break, and a gleam of weak sunshine fitfully lights up the scene. Then comes the long descent to the valley and another world is reached; no longer does the wind make walking difficult, for in the sheltered hollow it is very still, even the roar of the gale being hardly noticed.

Fog in town usually means discomfort, although it softens the ugly outlines of the factory and gives a fairy perspective to the tall buildings; but in the country mist both hides and reveals. It hides the landscape as a whole and isolates odd corners, giving them a beauty which is not apparent at any other time. Even the most commonplace scene reveals many a picturesque corner when it is thus isolated. In mist even more than in darkness there is the possibility of losing one's way. Mist changes everything completely, whereas darkness merely hides it. The walker keeps to his path by remembering little details, a wayside bush here, a pool there, a stretch of uneven path, and a falling gradient. Such knowledge will keep him right on the darkest night, but during thick mist a sense of direction must be added to familiarity with the way.

Those who know the countryside only in summer would not recognise it after a heavy fall of snow; all the familiar landmarks are hidden under the mantle of white, and haystacks and out-buildings take on unfamiliar shapes. There is a spice of adventure in walking across country under such conditions, especially if the fall is several days old and the top has hardened sufficiently to allow the pedestrian to cross it without sinking in. There are soft patches to be avoided, and in places the snow has shrunk from a hollow so that when the spot is crossed it falls slightly and makes him wonder if he has gone wrong and is going to sink through into a pond which it was intended to avoid. But



125. A YORKSHIRE HIGHWAY IN WINTER.



126. A HILL-ROAD IN WINTER.

as a rule thick snow makes walking fatiguing, and it is after a light fall that it is a delight to be abroad ; then it is often very cold and frosty, and the powdery snow glints in the sun like diamonds. When the fall has been overnight and only a few have passed that way, the tracks of the birds and animals can be studied.

Think, too, of the joys of being abroad on one of these fine warm days which sometimes comes in midwinter. The sky overhead is deep blue, the air is balmy, little flights of gnats may be observed in the farmyards, while down in the sheltered hollows of the hills the dandelion may be seen in blossom, and close to the surface the fresh shoots of the spring flowers may be found. In these favoured spots only a really severe winter makes itself felt, so that on such a day during ordinary seasons the walker may almost imagine that spring has come. If the day be the culmination of a spell of mild weather the squirrel takes the air, visiting his store of food, and the mouse has a little exercise in the hedge. The birds, too, are more lively and more vocal, for they also enjoy the bright warmth of the day. But as dusk begins to fall Winter once more asserts her sway. The colour goes out of the sky and the round disk of the sun sinks slowly into the gathering mist. The harmonies of the day give place to a deep silence, and the barking of a dog can be heard afar. A tiny spot of light moving aslant the darkness marks the shepherd proceeding to the fold, and soon the chorus of the sheep announces his arrival.

Stumbling down the footpath to the road the wayfarer can feel the frost reasserting its grip of the ground, and the smooth surface of the high road is very grateful after the ruts of the lane. The gaunt branches of the trees look very ghostly in the dim light, and their creaks and groanings reveal the origin of many an eerie tale. And so for a mile at swinging pace until at length the lights of the village come into view and the inviting portal of a friendly inn swallows up the pedestrian, his frame aglow with the healthy exercise. As he sits down to a meal before the fire feeling just pleasantly fatigued, he will tell you that there are few joys in life equal to a good walk in winter.

AFTERWORD

BY THE AUTHOR.

SINCE this book was written a great change has come over England ; a terrible war, not of our seeking, has awakened us from our comfortable dreams and brought back to our consciousness the real meaning of England and her hold on our affections. It might be said that this is not the time to sing the attractions of our country, but surely the more we realise them the more sternly we shall fight to keep our homes from suffering the fate which has overtaken the fair fields of France and the marshlands of Flanders and Poland.

Hidden behind the stolid exterior of the Englishman is a deep vein of sentiment, but he is apt to overlook the familiar, so that he has long taken for granted the rich landscapes and quiet pastoral beauty of the English countryside, loving it unconsciously, and only feeling its call when toiling in far-away places. For most of us, therefore, it has taken a devastating war to awaken such sentiments, and enable us to realise the comfort and homeliness of our own land. Even now, there are many who do not recognise this, so that a book which endeavours to set forth something of the romance and charm of England should be timely. Its chapters set forth the many-sidedness of rural England, its character of ripeness and repose, its ordered peace and settlement, its appearance of gradual natural growth, and its landscapes bearing the marks of centuries of cultivation and the loving care expended by countless generations.

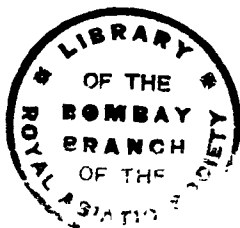
All these things were but dimly grasped by many who have only been aroused by the war, and men who had scarcely thought of such things began to remember all that England meant, how her customs date back to the building of our race ; her monuments recall a ceaseless fight against tyranny at home or abroad ; and her old hamlets and quiet towns show the ordered settlement and gradual evolution of a prosperous countryside. And all combined serve to emphasise the age-long destiny of Britain and her influence on the world.

Under the influence of recent developments, we find the present and the past joining hands in a manner impossible before the war. Tiny harbours which sent forth the cockle-shell warships of old now resound with the exhaust of motor-boat patrols ; stalwart soldiers from overseas Dominions spend their leave visiting the homes of their forbears ; and the coast searchlights recall the alarm beacons of old, while ancient earthworks stand close to the latest type of field fortifications that experience can suggest.

It is the past which has made England of to-day, and the present is but its continuation. Prehistoric trackway, ancient village, sleepy town, the farmhouse in the hollow, the sheepfold on the hill—all have rendered their share in the making of England, and the building up of that race whose sons are emulating on the battlefield the deeds of their forefathers set forth in quaint inscription on the walls of many a village church or in the mouldering records of ancient boroughs.

E. C. P.

May 1915.



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